TRAITOR *and* LOYALIST

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TRAITOR AND LOYALIST

"'I'm a traitor,' he said."

(*See p. 314.*)

TRAITOR AND LOYALIST

OR

THE MAN WHO FOUND HIS COUNTRY

BY

HENRY KITCHELL WEBSTER

AUTHOR OF "THE BANKER AND THE BEAR,"
"ROGER DRAKE," ETC., ETC.

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PART I

THE *SOUTHERN CROSS*

TRAITOR AND LOYALIST

CHAPTER I

On one of the early days of March in the year 1861, the honest Dutch ship *Vrede*, a big-nosed, wide-bottomed, stump-masted craft, was pounding along in a southwesterly direction off Hatteras. In the judgment of her master the northeaster which came roaring over the taffrail was entitled to be called a gale, so the *Vrede* was doing the best she could with double reefs in her topsails. She was right in the Gulf Stream, and the northeast wind, squarely against the set of that mighty current, piled up an irregular and curiously uncomfortable sea, so that the *Vrede*, high and dry and steady as she was in most winds and weathers, fairly wallowed in it. Her master, much too big a man to preserve even the appearance of dignity on deck while his ship indulged in such unwonted antics, was about to retire to his cabin and console himself with a finger or two of raw gin, when the lookout sighted a sail off the port quarter; so he paused to take a good look at her.

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It was not a stare of incredulity or amazement, for the sight he saw had been familiar on all the seas of the world since he had followed the sea, but no familiarity could lessen the wonder. The great ship was bearing as the *Vrede* bore, but was overhauling her as though the honest Dutch craft had been riding at anchor; in less than an hour she would be right abeam, and the master clung to the rail and gazed at her, nodding his head in grave recognition while she came foaming along.

In the opinion of her master the northeaster was but a breeze, and so above the topsails her topgallant sails were spread in sturdy defiance. Under this huge press of canvas she fled before the wind, but mocked its power as she fled, her long fine bows slicing, driving through the seas which came thundering over her forecastle as if their deadly earnest had been but child's play.

The master of the *Vrede* watched her as she came abreast of him and as she went tearing by, leaving a good twelve knots an hour behind her, and until she was hull down ahead his gaze did not cease to follow her, nor his head to nod from time to time, half disapproving, but half in admiration. When he went down to his cabin, he drank his gin to the Yankee skipper who walked her quarter-deck. He knew her

house-flag, a big white C on a red field, but it had not needed that, nor the Stars and Stripes broken out from her monkey-gaff and dipped in gracious answer to the *Vrede's* salute, to tell him what land she called Home.

Indeed, during the twoscore years preceding the Civil War, no hail, nor signal, nor even a seaman's eye, was needed to recognize a Yankee clipper. Wherever you met one of them, homeward bound from the Indies loaded with silks and spices, racing against time along the fifteen thousand miles' course from New York to San Francisco around the Horn, or fighting her way to windward in the teeth of a North Atlantic gale, fair weather or foul, you might always know the Yankee clipper. The perfection of her model, daringly fine but stanch against all but the utmost that the fury of wind and wave can do, the great clouds of canvas she carried, the matchless seamanship of her officers, — all helped tell the story of her nativity.

Captain Martin Carver was taking his ship, the *Southern Cross*, — she was the oldest ship of the famous White C Line, and still the best, according to her crew, — in ballast, to Wilmington, North Carolina, there to ship a cargo of cotton, and thence to sail with it to Liverpool. Ordinarily, he would have been sent to Charleston to get his cotton, but there was a little tem-

porary disturbance in the natural course of things at Charleston ; that, at least, was the view the owner of the White C Line took of it. South Carolina had seceded from the Union; a Major Anderson, with a handful of soldiers, was shut up in Fort Sumter, out in the middle of the harbor, and it was possible that they might make trouble before they turned it over to the state authorities who demanded possession. At Wilmington, where one could get a cargo of cotton about as easily, there was no such doubt or irregularity. It was true that a month before, in a moment of excitement, the citizens had gone down the river and seized Fort Caswell, but at a polite request from the Secretary of War in Washington they had given it back again, and now all was peace. So the *Southern Cross* had cleared from New York for the mouth of the Cape Fear River.

It was Martin Carver's first voyage in command. He was only twenty-four years old, and he was the son of old John Milton Carver, who owned the *Southern Cross* and all her sisters, and yet no one on board, before the mast or berthed in the steerage, ever called him an "owner's man." For, as his two elder brothers had done, Martin had come "over the bows." He had bunked in the reeking forecastle; he had undergone all the common sailor's routine with tar bucket and

holy stone, all his peril aloft in the gale; he had known cold and exhaustion; he had been hazed by angry officers, who had vowed to "work him up"; he had rotted with scurvy. The product of all this experience was the knowledge of many things, — things his father and his grandfather had known, things that can be learned in only one way. The greatest of them, perhaps, was obedience, unquestioning, instant, an obedience in those days nowhere else so thoroughly taught or so fiercely insisted upon as in the American merchant marine. He learned to do what was unnecessary, what was foolish, what was impossible, because it was ordered.

So for a few years, and then he was promoted to be second mate, a dog's berth even in the best-ordered ships, for one is neither officer nor of the crew and is treated with suspicion by both. One has responsibility but no privileges, authority but none of the sanctions of authority save what may reside in a steady eye and a hard hand. Then he sailed on a two years' cruise around the world as first mate — *the* mate — of the *Centaur*, under old Captain Dearborn. When he came back the *Southern Cross* was waiting for a commander, and, after a scanty week of shore leave, he was given his ship and his sailing orders and was off again on what was to be a rather eventful voyage.

His cargo of cotton was waiting for him when he reached Wilmington. He got it on board with as little delay as possible, and soon they were sailing out of New Inlet again, bound this time for Liverpool. He had plenty of wind all the way and a good proportion of it fair, and after an unusually quick passage, even for the *Southern Cross*, he anchored in the Mersey on the tenth of April.

A small gig was alongside before the ship was fairly at her moorings, and Martin, glancing down into it, gave an exclamation of surprise on seeing a well-known figure catch at the ladder and come scrambling nimbly over the side. He was a little man with a red face and grayish, sandy, mutton-chop whiskers. It was four years since Martin had seen him, but he had not changed a hair in the interval.

Between Martin's father, John Carver, and Mr. Patrick Odell there had existed a warm personal regard and a still closer business connection for nearly twenty years. They were not formally partners, of course, but in a good many enterprises they pooled the risks and shared the profits. In England Mr. Odell acted as Mr. Carver's agent, just as in New York Mr. Carver acted for him. Both had profited largely by the arrangement. London was still two weeks away from New York, and one could not be in both

places at the same time, as he can now. Mr. Carver and Mr. Odell were like enough to get on well together. Both were conservative, but neither was afraid to take a chance; both were matter-of-fact, but with a touch of the speculator's imagination added.

Odell shook hands with him, and then, stepping back and using an old friend's privilege, he looked him over, thoughtfully and at first silently. "When I heard of your promotion, Captain, I was inclined to think your father had put you on the quarter-deck a bit too young, but I'm thinking now he was right about it."

Martin had grown even beyond the great height which was to be expected of his father's son. He was nearly four inches more than six feet tall, and his leanness and his pronounced stoop made him look even taller. His hair, which had once been blue-black, had already a sprinkling of gray in it, and he wore a close-cropped beard. A thousand fogs and tempests had engraved a network of little wrinkles all about his eyes. No, he did not look too young to be captain of the *Southern Cross*.

"I thought we should get in before you were looking for us," said Martin. "We've made a very good run of it, even for the old *Cross*."

"I know the old ship," Odell answered. "I congratulate you, my boy, on commanding her.

And, by George, I congratulate her, too. It must be a good many years since she's carried a Carver on her quarter-deck."

"She's a member of the family," said Martin. "Father has taken her round the Horn five times himself."

"I've a letter here from your father," said Odell. "I think it wants a little talking over between us. I was anxious that you should make a quick run. I suppose that's why I was expecting you so soon."

Martin glanced at him, with a little apprehension. "Oh, I've no bad news for you," he went on reassuringly. "It's just a question of expediency. May I go down to your cabin?"

"I'll follow you in a moment," said the captain. "You know the way, don't you?"

John Carver's letter raised a really important question, and Mr. Odell might have used this moment of solitude to readjust what he had to say. He had expected to find the lad of four years back; to the bearded, grizzled man he had found instead the errand must be presented somewhat differently. But he forgot his errand in thinking of the man himself.

He found himself in some perplexity over Martin Carver. But Martin had puzzled his friends before, and he nearly always aroused the curiosity of strangers. His extraordinary height

and a certain ungainly grace about his motions had something to do with this, and the color of his eyes still more, for they were a light, cool gray, and with his sunburned skin and his black brows they contrasted oddly.

"His father is all there," mused Mr. Odell, "but there's something else. And I can't be perfectly sure whether it will help or hinder." He could not even guess, of course, how close home that question was to come to him in the next year, how much it was to affect his fortunes, but it was sufficiently absorbing without such prevision.

When Martin came down into the cabin, his father's letter was lying on the table. "If you'll read it first," said Mr. Odell, indicating it, "we can discuss the question to better advantage."

Martin read it rapidly through, then turned back to discover if he had missed anything. "I don't see what there is to discuss," he said. "Isn't it just like all his letters of this sort?"

Odell nodded.

"It just says that I'm to take on a cargo and go back to Wilmington."

"To Wilmington," said Odell, with emphasis, "unless we have some strong reason for acting differently."

"Well, why not to Wilmington?"

"That's a question, Captain, that you should be able to answer better than I."

"I haven't the bearings of this business," said Martin. "You'll have to explain, I guess."

"This is the way it lies. It will take you three weeks at least to sail from here to Wilmington. The latest news you can have from there when you start will be two weeks old. And five weeks, Captain Carver, is a long time, time enough for a great deal to happen. I am afraid that with the flag you fly at the peak you will have short shrift in the Cape Fear River. The *Southern Cross* would be warmly welcome, but she would never come out under the Stars and Stripes. There is going to be a war there, my boy. Your father doesn't think so — many of your people don't think so. But in your southern states they know it is coming. That is not the question as I see it. The question is, When will the war begin? It may have begun ten days ago. It will have begun, I'm afraid, before you can get into Wilmington — and out again."

"But Wilmington is in North Carolina. You don't expect North Carolina to secede, do you? They've voted against it already. The worst they'd do if it came to a fight would be to remain neutral."

Patrick Odell sat awhile in thoughtful silence.

He had his hobbies, his foibles, but he was a man of exceptionally shrewd judgment, nevertheless. For a man of clear vision London was a better viewpoint than either New York or Charleston.

"I don't think neutrality will be possible,—for very long, anyway,—and I doubt if state boundaries prove important. The quarrel cuts deeper than that. Do you know Wilmington very well?"

"No, I've called there several times, but I haven't any acquaintance there that amounts to anything. I suppose there is a great deal of sympathy with the Confederacy. But the state won't go out of the Union. They've even voted against a convention to consider it."

"They passed a military bill, though, six weeks ago, arming an increased militia. And there's something else. Do you know what will make a large part of your cargo if you sail for Wilmington? Muskets, Captain Carver, and shoes and blankets. A Wilmington gentleman, a Mr. Harper Townley, has been over here buying them. I don't know what else he's been doing, but that doesn't look as though he expected unbroken peace. That is only one of the straws. They all point to war, a great war, unless I've read the signs all wrong. Your present foreign secretary has spoken of the 'irrepressible conflict.' I believe it has begun."

Martin leaned forward, his elbows on the table, and ran his big hands through his hair. He was silent for a while. "You have taken me by surprise, Mr. Odell," he said, and then fell silent again. But at last he let his clasped hands fall forward on the table, shook his head impatiently, and looked across at the thin little man.

"I've spent my life at sea," he said. "I'm no politician. I've left state's rights and squatter sovereignty to those who understand them. There's all I can ever know, and a good deal more, to be learned out of sight of land. But still I think you're mistaken, Mr. Odell. There are always a good many men in a ship's company who say a great deal more than they mean to do, and I guess it's much the same ashore; there's plenty of big talk and small actions. I should act on your judgment rather than my own, though, if it weren't for my father's letter. He had as late information when he wrote that, I suppose, as we have now."

He made rather a long pause there, and his eyes which had held Odell's while he spoke were gazing absently through the port-hole. It was clear that he had something more to say, and Odell waited for it.

"It's easy for a man to puzzle himself over large questions," he went on at last. He was speaking very slowly, and there was an odd

change in his voice and his inflection which caught Odell's attention. "I have sometimes done it. I have asked myself more questions during a night-watch than I could find answers for in all my life. There are men who can do some good that way, with the large questions, I mean, but not many, I think, and I know I'm not one. There's a great question now between the North and the South. There are plenty of people trying to find the answer, but I have no answer."

Then he roused himself, and in his old manner he said, "I have problems enough in sailing my ship and obeying orders from home, and I guess it's pretty clear that my duty now is to carry out instructions and take my ship back to Wilmington." His smile as he finished was not apologetic, but it took off the edge, somewhat, of his flat rejection of the older man's advice.

Nevertheless, Odell rose a little stiffly. "Very good," he said. "It's your responsibility, of course." In a moment, however, he changed his mind and held out his hand. "I'm very sorry that I couldn't convince you, but you're right to do what seems best to you."

They talked a little longer, and as he was about to go, Odell said, "I shall have some passengers for you for Wilmington, — Mr. Townley, of whom I spoke to you, and his wife and

daughter. They're waiting to hear whether you're going to sail for there or not. I must write them to-day."

"We aren't really very well equipped to carry passengers," Martin protested; "and they'll reach home much sooner if they go by New York. We'll be several days getting off and there's no telling what wind and weather we may fall in with."

Mr. Odell laughed. "They're determined to go direct to Wilmington, and are only waiting to hear what you mean to do. Mrs. Townley and her daughter will surely go. Townley himself has meant all along to go with them, but he thinks now that he may be detained."

"What?" cried Martin. "Am I to have charge of a woman and child alone? I can't do it at all. What could I do with them if it began to blow?"

"Wait till you see them," said Mr. Odell, "the 'child' especially. They'll come down here directly they get my letter. I'll have Mrs. Odell come too, and we'll all dine together."

CHAPTER II

Mr. and Mrs. Harper Townley, of Wilmington, North Carolina, lived in only moderately prosperous circumstances, and their decision to send their only daughter, Celia, to England to "finish" her education caused some comment among their neighbors. It was to be done only at a sacrifice, but as nothing could be too good and but few things good enough for Celia, they made the sacrifice most cheerfully. After she had been gone about a year, the home in Wilmington was broken up for business reasons which kept both Mr. Townley and his son, Harper Junior, almost constantly away from the city, the house was rented, and Mrs. Townley went to England to spend the second year with her daughter. That was in the fall of 1860.

The spring of '61 brought them a series of surprises. First, the unlooked-for appearance of Mr. Townley; then his announcement that they were to go home with him as soon as some business he had at hand could be settled; last of all his decision that his wife and daughter should go at once, without waiting for him. He would follow as closely as possible.

These rather kaleidoscopic changes wrought in Celia a mixture of sentiments in which she herself could not decide whether sweet or bitter was the predominant flavor.

All her life she had been given pretty much her own way, had been openly admired by outsiders and none the less openly adored by her family, whom she domineered over and loved devotedly in return. Now all of them at home, including Harper, her older brother and special ally, seemed suddenly to be making plans and doing surprising things without the slightest regard to her, and with never so much as "by your leave."

She was glad to be going home again on any terms, and the long voyage in a sailing ship was as pleasant a prospect as possible; but Mr. Odell, with better intentions than results, had talked about the *Southern Cross* and her boy captain until Celia was heartily tired of hearing about it. She knew nothing against Martin Carver except that he was a Northerner — a Yankee — so after deciding that he must be rather ridiculous, she dismissed him from her mind until the inevitable hour when they should dine together in Liverpool a day or two before sailing.

When Mr. Odell presented him on the night of the dinner, she got the shock of a violent surprise. She hardly more than glanced at him

during the moment of the introduction, but in that glance she catalogued the following facts: that he looked fully forty, that his hair was grayish, his beard cut in an outlandish fashion, or rather in no fashion at all (by that you are to understand that he did not wear the long "weepers" assumed by Mr. Sothern's Lord Dundreary), that he stooped and stood a little sideways, and that his clothes — he was in evening dress — didn't fit, or at least were wrinkled, and in a style two years old.

That was all more or less true. He certainly looked nearer the man of forty than the boy of four years back who had furnished the basis of Mr. Odell's description. He stooped, you may almost say crouched a little, as nearly every man does who has to accommodate himself to people a foot shorter than he, to talk to them, to use their furniture, and go through their doors; as to his dress, a single voyage, if it be a long one, is enough to put a seaman's shore clothes out of fashion and to leave him a little awkward in them. All of those allowances would have been made at once by a reasonable and friendly critic, but Celia was not friendly, and cheerfully owned to being unreasonable.

The company after a moment divided, Mrs. Odell, Mr. Townley, and Martin Carver in one group, and Celia, her mother, and Mr. Odell in

the other. Celia would have looked again at Martin, but that she felt he was looking at her. She turned quite away from him and addressed Mr. Odell. He had the true Irish love for a pretty face, and they were by this time great friends.

"I ought to have guessed that you were drawing the long bow," she said. "But you ought to be careful how you tell romantic stories to romantic young girls. What if I had fallen in love with your mythical boy captain — your handsome boy captain, only — how old was it? — twenty-four? I ought to have fainted away when I found how I had been deceived. It would have been no more than you deserve."

"Ah, my dear, he does a man's work. It has bent his shoulders and lined his face, but he has a boy's heart still, to my thinking." He smiled tolerantly as he said it, not displeased that she should be impudent with him, but still not caring to join her rather forced banter. That and her mother's plain look of disapproval drove her a step further. "Perhaps" — she lowered her voice — "perhaps the captain was too busy to come, and has sent the — what is it they have on ships? — the boatswain instead."

"Celia!" cried her mother. Mr. Odell flushed angrily. Impudence was well enough, but there was something too much of it here. In a mo-

"'Perhaps the captain was too busy to come, and has sent the —the boatswain instead.'"

ment more, though, he gave a chuckle of real amusement.

She looked at him interrogatively. "What is it?" she asked.

"Oh, nothing witty, my dear. I was amusing myself with thinking of the handsome retraction you'll be making some day. I shan't be there to see, but I shall enjoy imagining it."

Celia had turned toward Martin again. Her second glance merely confirmed the first; at least she was able to make it do so. Then she looked back to Mr. Odell with a not quite imperceptible shrug of her bare shoulders. "Perhaps it's just as well that you're depending on imagination for your enjoyment of it," she said.

"Did you hear Titiens and Alboni sing 'Semiramide' the other night, Mr. Odell?" asked Mrs. Townley, quickly.

To her relief dinner was announced before he had time to reply. After they were seated he reverted to her question, and for a few minutes the talk was on musical matters, — the new opera, "Martha," which Titiens was bringing into high favor, Mr. Wallace's "Lurline," over which there was some discussion as to whether or not it was better than "Maritana," and somebody spoke of the disastrous failure in Paris, the month before, of Richard Wagner's "Tannhäuser." The discussion was limited to the four older people,

for Martin, of course, could say nothing on the subject and Celia wouldn't. She was, in fact, extremely cross and a little sulky. She had insulted her good friend, Mr. Odell, and had got from him a rebuke which was the sharper for its obliquity; she had distressed her mother, and, worst of all, her attempt to ridicule Martin Carver had fallen flat. It was not very funny, she must admit.

"I've often fancied," said Odell, addressing Martin, "from your speaking voice that you ought to sing yourself."

Celia looked up at him, wickedly hoping he would confess to "Larboard Watch Ahoy" or perhaps even "Gentle Annie."

"When I was before the mast," he said, "they paid me the compliment of making me chantey man. I'm not sure that you know what that is."

Those were the first consecutive words she had heard him speak, and her pleasure in the mere sound of his voice obliterated, or delayed for a moment, their meaning.

"Do you know, Miss Celia?" asked Odell, innocently.

She was looking at Martin, but did not at once make any reply, though now he was waiting for it. Then she caught herself and answered coolly that she did not know but would like to very well. Mr. Odell was looking at her, smiling

again, and that made her flush, which, in turn, made her cross again, and she missed the greater part of Carver's explanation.

But the others listened and led him on to talk about the sea, and before long she had forgotten her disgust with herself and her annoyance over what she chose to consider Mr. Odell's offences, and was paying as close attention as any of them.

And when the party broke up for the evening she braved Mr. Odell's smile, though she flushed consciously under it, and held out her hand to Martin Carver. "We've enjoyed the things you told us very much indeed," she said.

During the drive to their hotel with her father and mother she was silent, but when she had been alone in her room a little while, she was glad to hear her mother's knock, and to observe as she came in that it was to settle down for one of their old-time midnight visits.

"Your father had some matters to attend to before he could go to bed," said Mrs. Townley, in explanation.

Celia frowned. "I hate mystery," she said; "at least I hate to be left out of a mystery." She drew an ottoman close to her mother's chair, seated herself on it, and asked, "Don't you think I'm old enough to be trusted with this one, Mummy?"

Her mother patted the brown head resting on

her knee. "It's nothing for you to worry about, daughter," she said.

Celia drew herself up as majestically as the ottoman permitted and made no reply, but in a moment she nestled back in the old way. "There!" she said, and then after a little pause, "It was a pleasant evening after all; even after I had tried as hard as I could to spoil it."

"Your father is very much pleased with Mr. Carver. He says he is evidently a man of considerable ability in his line and not at all reckless. He will feel a good deal safer about us for having met him."

"He isn't so uncivilized as I thought at first. I'll retract that much for Mr. Odell's satisfaction. I'm sure he is not a — a boatswain in disguise. He's more like a gentleman than most Yankees."

"How many Yankees do you know, dear?" asked her mother, laughing.

"Well, I know what they're like, and so do you, mother. You remember what Dolly Sherwin said about some of the ones she saw at Washington."

Her mother nodded. "Just think," she said, "in a month you and Dolly will have forgotten you've ever been apart at all."

On the next day but one after the dinner, the *Southern Cross* with her new cargo and her two

passengers aboard sailed out of the Mersey. Mr. Townley and Mr. Odell both came aboard to see them off, and did not go over the side till the anchors hung at the cat-heads and the great bird had spread her wings for flight.

Martin Carver had known nothing, of course, of the various motives which had led to Celia's friendly demonstration at the end of the dinner, — the wish to defy Mr. Odell, to propitiate her mother, and, somewhat more generously, to atone for an injustice to himself of which he could not possibly have been aware. What he knew was that she had come across the room to him, to *him*, and had smiled up at him and given him her hand and said, "We've enjoyed the things you told us very much indeed."

That was not a great deal for a pretty girl to say or do, but it was enough to bring the blood surging up under his tanned and wrinkled skin and his ill-cut beard. Indeed it was only a boy who lay long awake that night, remembering. Remembering the beruffled pink gown with its low bodice, and the one pink rose she wore, her slender arms, and the two brown curls which framed her neck and lying dark on her white bosom made it the whiter; remembering how, half disdainfully, she had ignored him at the first, and then, at the last, the one moment when she had given him her hand and smiled at him.

If Celia had been less preoccupied with what Mr. Odell was thinking and what he might choose to say in triumph afterward, she would have seen something of the havoc this easily given favor was working, and the stooping shoulders, the tan, and the wrinkles would not have availed to disguise the boy who stood before her. She made the discovery soon enough as it was, and it cannot be denied that she enjoyed it.

At twenty Celia Townley was old in the experience of a certain sort of half-serious love-making, old enough, indeed, to have ceased to care for it. All the boys she had grown up with had, at one time or another, fallen in love with her, and she had discouraged them, sent them away, brought them back — put them through their paces, in short, just as Dolly Sherwin and her other friends did and as their mothers had done before them. It was all a very innocent sort of thing, but she knew it was rather silly and when she was starting away for her two years in England and had made her farewells to the disconsolate two or three who happened at the time to be so affected by the event, she resolved that she would never do it any more.

Certainly nothing was farther from her mind, when she and her mother went aboard the *Southern Cross*, than a flirtation with the lank

Yankee captain. But before the ship was out of the Mersey, her mind was sufficiently disengaged from the past to take an active interest in the present, and the most interesting circumstance under her observation was the attitude toward herself of Martin Carver. She noticed how he blushed when she spoke to him, how eager were all his little attentions to her mother and herself, how her showing interest in any of his duties pleased him, and how distressed he was when she had betrayed him into saying something which she could torture into dispraise of herself. His devotion was very boyish, very primitive, but with all her experience she liked it, partly because she liked him, partly because he belonged so evidently to another world than hers that he piqued her curiosity. It was delightful to see this bearded giant, to whom the complex enginery of a great ship was so simple, whose lightest command had instant obedience, who carried the lives of all of them in his great hands,—to see him confused and helpless before the simple riddles she offered him.

For the first few days of the voyage the weather was crystal clear, the sea calm, and the breeze so light as to little more than keep the ship, for all her great spread of canvas, under steerageway. Martin made as much as he could of the leisure this state of things offered, and as for Celia, if

her conscience was not perfectly easy, she could at least pretend that it was.

But when her mother came into her cabin one night just after she had got into bed and said she wished to talk with her, she guessed at once what was coming.

Mrs. Townley lighted the lamp. "Can't we talk in the dark just as well, Mummy?" Celia asked.

"No," said Mrs. Townley, thoughtfully, "I don't believe we can to-night."

Celia shielded her eyes from the light and smiled, but the look in her mother's face sobered her. She raised herself on her hands and placed the pillow upright behind her, then faced her mother again, sitting quite erect. "What do you want to talk about, mother?" she asked.

For a little while Mrs. Townley was silent, and when she did speak it was, at first, only to say, "I don't know that my saying anything can do any good," but presently she continued: —

"Of course you have known, Celia, that what you have been doing since we sailed has displeased me and hurt me — yes, and made me a little ashamed of you."

"Mother!"

"And I don't know that saying it, when you've known it all along, will make any difference to you."

Celia looked at her, wide-eyed. "I don't know what you mean," she said slowly, but her face turned crimson and she buried it in her hands.

"I mean that you have been trying to lead Captain Carver on into making love to you. I don't understand why. You would hardly want to boast of such a conquest to — "

Celia looked up quickly. "Why don't you talk to him about it?" she cried. "If you're ashamed of me, and if you think it no use talking to me, why don't you warn him — if he isn't old enough to guard himself against me!"

"He isn't — so far as that goes," said her mother, "and you know it perfectly well. But that has nothing to do with the case. I'm not concerned about Captain Carver or his feelings, but I am concerned when my daughter degrades herself by flirting with a Yankee sea-captain. I had always thought I could trust your sense of the fitness of things to tell you who were our kind of people and who weren't. It seems I was mistaken."

Celia made no reply. She had turned away from her mother as far as possible, and, with her face buried in the crook of her arm, was struggling with her sobs.

Her mother watched her a moment, and then her own breathing grew tremulous and she held out her hands. "Celia," she said.

But the girl made no more response than to huddle a little farther away. "It may be," said Mrs. Townley, in a troubled voice, "that your father and I are a little to blame. Mr. Odell, of course, being a foreigner, could not understand, and your father had reasons of his own for meeting him at the dinner. But you seemed to understand well enough then. As you said, the captain is more civilized than most of them, but —"

Celia faced her mother again, defiantly. Her lips trembled so that she could hardly articulate, but by struggling with each word she got it out. "He is as good a gentleman as anybody, and if he should ask me to marry him I believe I would do it. Nobody else cares anything about me. You're ashamed of me, and father has reasons of his own, and —" Her words came quicker toward the last, and ended in a sob as she buried her face in the pillow.

Her mother for a little while continued where she was, sometimes making a motion as if to try to comfort the quivering figure in the bed and then drawing back again. At last she stood up and bent over her. "Celia," she said, "I was angry and I'm afraid I've made a mistake. We won't talk about it any more to-night." Then she put out the light and softly closed the door behind her.

Any sort of rebuke was rare in Celia's experience, and, from her mother, almost unknown. This one cut deep, and it was a long time before the impetus of her emotion spent itself; but at last it did and she could lie still again and draw a long breath comparatively steadily. But she was neither awake nor asleep, she could get neither the self-command of the one state nor the self-forgetfulness of the other, and coming finally to the end of her endurance she dressed herself, as best she could in the dark, and went softly up on deck.

She was still not fully in possession of herself, and when Martin Carver spoke to her from near at hand, she started and almost cried out. Then "I didn't know you were here," she said.

Except for the seaman who was standing his trick at the wheel, they had the quarter-deck to themselves, for with the captain in charge, the second mate, whose watch it was, had gone forward.

"Are you ill?" he asked anxiously. "Is anything the matter?"

She shook her head and instinctively turned a little away, because she had been crying, though what faint light there was on deck would not have betrayed her under any scrutiny.

"I'm afraid you are still offended with me," said Martin. She had affected to be indignant

over something he had done or left undone that very evening, but she looked at him now in genuine surprise. Then slowly it came back to her, — it and a dozen other pretences she had imposed upon him, — and her face crimsoned and again she turned away. All that seemed long ago.

"I wasn't offended with you this evening." She spoke absently, and though she paused he waited for what she had still to say. "Not yesterday nor any other time since I met you. I was — it was all — "

She made no attempt to finish, and after a little period of troubled silence he said, "I don't understand — "

She interrupted him. "No, you don't understand." Then she drew herself up and faced him squarely, "Captain Carver, I have treated you abominably."

"Only sometimes," he interrupted.

She laughed shortly. "No. The rest of the time was worse. I am sorry and I beg your pardon."

He barely heeded the words at all. It was her tone, cold, serious, measured, that carried her meaning, or part of it, to him. He started to speak, but there seemed to be nothing he could say, and dropping his hands on the rail, he stared out over the black water.

"I don't believe you understand, quite," the

girl went on, uncertainly. "I want to start again. I want us to be friends — honestly friends. Don't you think we can be?"

He was silent so long that she stirred uneasily, but at last he faced her and answered slowly.

"I'm not sure. Perhaps we can. We'll try to be; and — thank you, Miss Celia."

She was determined against another silence. "It must be very late," she said.

"Just gone five bells, in the middle watch. Half-past two."

"Why were you — on deck?" She thought when too late to check it that the question was indiscreet.

"There's a storm coming," he answered. "The barometer has been falling since nine o'clock." He looked about the sky and added, "We'll be getting the first of it before very long. You had better get what sleep you can before it comes. You won't have very much after that for a while." He paused an instant, then added, "You'll not be afraid, will you?"

He had walked with her to the companion-way. There she turned and held out her hand to him. "No," she said simply, "I shan't be afraid. Good night — and — thank you."

CHAPTER III

The storm justified Martin's prediction and rather more. As long as she could carry sail the gallant old ship beat up into the tempest, but at last she had to give it up; she was hove to, and, her spars quite bare save for one triangular rag of canvas to hold her head into the wind, she was blown and buffeted by the tempest a hundred miles and more to leeward. Her main topgallant mast had gone over the side, and two of her boats had been reduced to a handful of slats before the blow was over. Indeed, to the unskilled eyes of Mrs. Townley and her daughter, when they first came up on deck after things had quieted down, the *Southern Cross* looked a complete wreck, and it interested them both as much as they, in their condition, could be interested in anything, to see how quickly and skilfully the mess was cleared away and everything put shipshape again.

After that there were days when it was flat calm, or when what breeze there was came from dead ahead; when it seemed as though their voyage had already lasted for years and must last for years to come; when all the interest

they had had ashore seemed like dreams which they had half forgotten. But at last the wind blew fair, the towering clouds of sail came to life, and like a hawk unhooded, the ship took flight for port. The tedium of the voyage was over for the Townleys. Every day Martin showed them their new position on the chart, and along with their anxiety to reach home again was mingled a genuine regret that the delicious lazy hours of idling on deck in the shadow of a sail, watching the billows as the great ship raced over their backs, or of putting off sleep as long as possible while they listened to the rustle of the water outside their walls of oak, would soon be at an end.

One evening after supper as they stood on deck together watching the sunset, Martin joined them. "We've made two hundred and seventy miles in this last twenty-four hours," he said. "To-morrow morning with luck we ought to pick up Federal Point light."

"I want to walk," said Celia. "Come, mother, you've taken no exercise for nearly a week." As they moved off she invited Martin, by a nod of her head, to join them; so the three began pacing abreast up and down the deck.

"I should be sorry if we weren't so near home, Captain Carver," said Mrs. Townley, "but I'm more than a little sorry that we are. We've

spent a delightful month on the *Southern Cross*, and you'll let me say — won't you? — that it has been largely your doing. You have made it very pleasant, and you've taught us a good deal beside."

"I haven't succeeded very well as a teacher," said Martin. "I 've done my best, but I'm afraid I couldn't trust Miss Celia's reading of the sextant within five degrees yet. And she won't even try to box the compass."

"You may have taught us some things without knowing it," her mother said quietly, and Celia hardly believed her ears. Martin made no attempt to discover her meaning, and in a moment Mrs. Townley spoke again.

"We are going back as strangers to Wilmington," she said, "and it will take us some time to settle there again and really feel at home, but the next time you are there you must make us a visit."

Martin thanked her, but he looked at Celia. "Of course you must," she said. She spoke a little breathlessly, and there was a wave of bright color in her face.

Neither Celia nor her mother had referred again to what had passed between them the night before the storm. The acknowledged peril they were in during the next days did away even with the remembrance of it.

They had seen nothing of him in those days, but the steward was constantly bringing messages,

inquiries, reassurances from him, and also adding on his own responsibility some account of the captain's doings; how during the height of the storm he never left the deck; how, once or twice, he had even gone aloft to help and cheer his exhausted crew. And after the worst was over, and the ship was staggering on again under what little sail she could carry, the steward had told Celia another story: that the two men at the wheel — it needed two men to hold the plunging thing against the sea that was running — had in a mad lurch been hurled across the deck and against the side so hard that both were disabled. Captain Carver had seized the wheel himself, and, instead of calling aft two men to take their places, had steered the vessel alone for the rest of the watch. "They were strong men and able seamen," said the steward, "but they couldn't hold it. And he did it alone." When Celia told the story over again to her mother, she told it proudly, as though he belonged to her.

She had wondered how he would look after the storm was over, had expected to find him shrunken, grayer, ten years older than on the night when they had agreed to be friends; and when she saw that he was just the same, when he came up to her and simply but almost shyly complimented her for enduring the danger so

steadily, the eyes of her understanding were suddenly opened wide. She could read now the story which was written in his gray hairs and in the fine lines about his eyes, and a lump in her throat kept her from answering him.

But she had studiously avoided talking about him or giving her mother a chance to do so. And thus it fell out she was quite ignorant, until this last evening as the three paced the deck together, of the great change that had taken place in her mother's opinion of the "Yankee sea-captain."

"You may have taught us some things without knowing it." After the wave of sheer incredulous astonishment subsided, the girl found herself inexplicably happy. She walked on a little way with them and managed to add her word to Mrs. Townley's invitation in a voice that was steady enough not to attract her mother's attention. But the impulse to be alone was too strong to resist, and, without making an excuse, she left them — her mother and her big captain — talking on together, and fled to the solitude of her own cabin.

Later in the evening she and her mother sat out on deck in the moonlight. The captain had been standing by, talking to them, — he never sat down himself when on deck, — but he had gone away and they heard the rhythm of his

footsteps as he tramped back and forth behind them. They were sitting close together, and Celia, finding her mother's hand under the folds of her shawl, held it against her cheek for a moment and then kissed it.

For hours after they had gone below Martin continued his steady patrol. The port watch turned out at twelve o'clock and the first mate did not go forward as the second mate would have done on finding the captain on deck; but soon discovering that Martin was not in a talking mood, he withdrew to the lee side and left him to his thoughts and his solitary patrol in peace.

The voyage was nearly at an end, — the days in which almost every hour brought him a chance to see her were gone. There had been as much pain as pleasure in them. He had been fathoms deep in love with her from the first, but since that night when she made her confession and asked his pardon he had been beyond all soundings. He had promised to try to be friends, but even the iron discipline his training had taught him was barely enough to hold him. He saw nothing extraordinary, as Celia did, in Mrs. Townley's invitation, for he had thought of seeing them in their home in Wilmington quite as a matter of course. Mrs. Townley's behavior toward him had never given him a hint of the

prejudice which she had once entertained and he had unwittingly overcome. But when his next visit to Wilmington would be was of course problematical. And what if Odell were right after all and there should be a war! He had forgotten politics, continents, everything, in those days. The *Southern Cross* had been a world to him.

He had vaguely heard the lookout report a ship a while back, but he started when the mate at his elbow spoke to him.

"She's a steamer, sir, and seems to be headed for us," he said, holding out his glass. "Would you like to look at her? She's been in sight a good while and coming right along."

Martin took the glass and looked. "She's heading right athwart our hawse sure enough," he said. "And by the bone in her teeth she's in a hurry."

"What does it mean, Captain?"

"We'll know soon enough, I guess," said Martin, grimly. Then he continued, after a pause: "Set your course a little more off the wind, Mr. Jones. Two points will be enough to find out what she means."

"Yes, sir," and the mate repeated the order to the man at the wheel.

The next few minutes were interesting. Both officers had their glasses now and were watching the on-coming steamer intently.

"There she goes," said the mate as the steamer changed her course. "She means us."

"She'll signal us to heave to in a minute," said the captain. "Ah, there it is. She's a man-of-war; I can see her guns." He shut his glass with a snap. "Put down your helm, Mr. Jones."

Then came the hail, "What ship is that?"

"The *Southern Cross*, of New York, for Wilmington, thirty days out of Liverpool."

The captain of the man-of-war seemed to think this a little too innocent, for after announcing that his ship was the United States steamer *Union*, he added that he would send a boat alongside; and a few minutes later an ensign came over the rail.

"Are you the master?" he asked Martin. "I'd like to see your papers. Well," he went on after they were seated in the cabin and a glance at the clearance had convinced him that the ship was as represented, "it's lucky for you, Mr. Carver, that you fell in with us. They'd have made short work of you in the Cape Fear River."

"What do you mean?"

"We're at war with them. They took Fort Sumter a month ago and more, and within a week after that we were right at it. The President has called out seventy-five thousand troops

and declared a blockade, and Jefferson Davis is issuing letters of marque to all the privateers he can get. One of them is likely to snap you up any hour — and a good prize you'd make, too."

"But," said Martin, "North Carolina wasn't in the Confederacy. What has Wilmington to do with it?"

"Oh, they're all together," the ensign answered. "The whole coast is under blockade from Norfolk down."

The inspection of the papers was soon over. The boat pulled away, and presently the steamer started on. There was little breeze. What there was, was coming from a point or two south of west. Martin looked thoughtfully at the receding steamer, then turned to the mate. "You may drop off to starboard, Mr. Jones, and steer north." Then he went below and knocked on Mrs. Townley's door.

"Yes," she answered quickly. "Is anything the matter?"

"Nothing to alarm you," said Martin, "but something important. I'd like to speak to you and Miss Celia, if you please."

"I'll be out directly," announced Celia from her room.

After the first shock of the ensign's announcement, Martin put the large question, the rights and wrongs and possibilities of it all, out of his

mind and gave his attention to the immediate problem which faced him. What was he to do with his ship and his passengers? Before he gave the last order to the mate he had a plan, and while Mrs. Townley and Celia were dressing a little study of his coast chart showed him that it was quite possible. He went on deck for a moment, and taking his glass with him focussed it on the steamer. She was about two miles away. "We'll begin to take soundings, if you please, Mr. Jones; and as soon as that steamer is hull down let me know."

He found Celia waiting for him in the cabin. "Mother will be out in a minute," she said; "is it something very serious?"

"Yes," he answered gravely, and in as few words as possible he told her. The cabin lamp burned dimly and the gray dawn without had not penetrated there, but he could see the red spot in each of her cheeks and how bright her eyes were.

"Oh," she cried, "I'm glad they did it. And I'm proud of the rest of the South for standing by them. It will teach those meddlesome abolitionists a lesson."

Mrs. Townley made no comment when they told her the news, but she turned a little pale and pressed her lips tightly together for a moment. Then she asked, "What are you going to do

with us, Captain Carver? You can't take us further in than Smithville, I suppose."

"I can't even take you there," said Martin. "The mouth of the river is probably under blockade already, and even if it's not, anything inside could capture this ship — a tug or a launch if it had a gun on board.

"But I think," he went on before they had time to express their consternation, "that I can probably land you from a boat at Masonboro Inlet. That's only six miles from Wilmington, isn't it? and you could drive across. I can't promise, of course, but I imagine we'll be able to land you there without being molested."

"She's hull down now, sir," the mate called down the companion.

Martin hurried on deck. The soundings enabled him to determine his position very closely; the steamer was out of the way and would pay no more attention to him, so under his quick orders the helm went over to starboard, her head swung up nearer the wind, and she began working her way along on a taut bowline toward Masonboro Inlet.

That was an interminable day. The breeze grew lighter and lighter as the morning advanced, and about noon dropped entirely. The captain and his passengers ate their dinner in gloomy silence. The great fact of the war which had

come upon them so suddenly was big with portent. It insistently asked questions and suggested speculations, it wrapped itself around even the most minute and routine matters, and still the stupendous nature of itself forbade the finding of answers to the very questions it asked. As Martin Carver had done, both women made a resolute effort to push it back for a few hours, until the thing which lay just before them could be accomplished. It would have been hard enough to do in any case, but while their ship rocked unprogressive on the glassy ground-swell, it was impossible. They gave up even trying to talk. Martin went on deck, and Celia and her mother affected to busy themselves in their rooms with the last of the packing up, which had really been done hours ago.

Somehow they wore out the day. The afternoon was waning when Martin, as he searched the southern horizon with his glass, heard a step beside him. Celia had come on deck alone. "Are you looking for the wind?" she asked.

"The breeze will be here soon, but it will blow off land. We'll work along as far as we dare, and to-morrow, early, we should be able to send you ashore. We've been nearly in sight of land all day."

They both tried nervously to keep the talk going, but it would not do. Every subject that

came up enveloped itself at once in the black cloud which they were resolved not to look at yet, and at last Celia admitted that this was so. "Let's not try to talk any longer. There's really nothing to say."

Martin stood looking at her. She was leaning back against the companion, unaware of his gaze, her eyes far out at sea. The long voyage, the untempered sun, and the breath of the wind had deepened the ivory tint of her skin into something warmer. Her lips were slightly parted; her thoughts seemed to have followed her eyes out to the horizon. Martin, having looked, was powerless to look away.

Slowly she seemed to become conscious of his look. The color came up into her cheeks and her breathing was quicker. She turned farther away from him, and then, involuntarily it seemed, turned back again and their eyes met. The words he tried to say would not come to his lips. So they stood for a moment, and then she found herself. With a little gasp that tried to be a laugh she broke the silence.

"Give me the glass," she said. "I'll try to find what you were looking for."

His hand shook as he gave it to her, and she did not hold it very steadily. After a moment his eyes followed its direction out to the south and then, suddenly, —

"Let me take it again, please," he said. The crisp resonance of his voice startled her, and his impatient hurry as he focussed the glass again made her look back to the horizon apprehensively. She thought she made out a faint blur, — yes, there was no doubt about it, a tiny smudge of smoke.

"Bring your glass, Mr. Jones, and tell me what you make of this," called Martin. The two men gazed in silence for a while. Then the mate lowered his glass and looking at the lifeless sails said grimly, "Well, whatever she is I guess we'll have to wait for her."

At that moment there came a crinkling scurry over the glassy surface of the water from the west, and a puff of air struck their faces. The yards creaked as they swung and the sails stirred idly.

Martin shot a quick order to the helmsman and then directed the mate to call all hands. Jones hurried forward; there came a clatter on the scuttle and the cry, "Ahoy the starboard watch! Tumble up."

The flaw spent itself quickly, but in a moment came another and heavier one. The sails slatted against the masts and then, as the ship wore slowly around, filled again. The manœuvre was a familiar one to Celia, but there was something new about the way it was executed; the old swiftness and precision of perfect discipline were

just as always, but there was also a new note of excitement. It rang in Martin's voice, repressed but vibrant, as he gave the orders; it came back plainer still in the antiphony from waist and forecastle, and plainest of all in the wild swing of the chantey that rose from the men who were hauling at the braces. She could only guess at the meaning of it all, but the excitement infected her none the less for that. The glances of all about her shifted between the hurrying clouds which were piling up the western sky and the spreading daub of black smoke off to the southward, and her eyes followed theirs. She could make out a funnel and a hull below the daub now.

Before the freshening wind the *Southern Cross* was rapidly gathering headway, but the funnel grew larger and the hull plainer and the black streamer of smoke flaunted wider against the sky. Martin had been watching it through the glass. Now he came up beside Celia and handed it to her.

"You may recognize the craft," he said. "She's out of Wilmington most likely."

The steamer was a small side-wheel craft which she had often seen in the river. The last thing about it to catch her attention was an ungainly-looking object in the bows. While she still looked at it there came from it, silently, a puff of flame and white smoke.

"What are they doing?" she asked.

"Firing. Listen!" and on the heels of his words came through the air a sort of throb which sounded, if one may call it a sound, like a single tap upon a great drum.

"At us?" She asked it half incredulously. He nodded. "That's why we're running away," he said.

Mrs. Townley had been in the cabin reading, and the "drum beat" brought her her first intimation of the sudden turn affairs had taken. She hurried on deck, and a glance at the steamer and a sentence from Martin told her what the situation was.

"Wasn't that a rather imperative summons to surrender your ship?" she asked, a little uneasily.

Martin smiled. "Not while this breeze holds."

The gun spoke again, and Martin noted how far short the shot fell. "They'd hardly do that if they weren't afraid we had the heels of them. However, for a while, I think you and Miss Celia had better go below. There's no danger up here, but perhaps —" he smilingly admitted the paradox — "there'd be even less down there."

Celia protested for a moment, but soon yielded and followed her mother down the companion-way.

Really the issue was as yet by no means decided. It was true, as he said, the *Southern Cross* was outfooting her pursuer who had but six or seven knots in her, at the best, and the breeze was blowing fresher steadily. But the steamer when she sighted the ship had been some distance to seaward of her, and on giving chase, instead of running in, had preserved the advantage this position bestowed. The westerly sweep of the coast compelled the *Southern Cross* to put out seaward also, and therefore to run on the hypothenuse of a triangle, while the steamer held to one of the legs. For a while, in spite of the ship's greater speed, the space between the two narrowed alarmingly. When the steamer fired for the third time the shot came uncomfortably close.

But that was the worst of it, and in a moment more they were across the line and running straight away from her. The light was nearly gone, but by what was left they saw the steamer put back for home. Martin stared after her until she was lost in the dark. Then he drew a long breath and went slowly down into the cabin, where his passengers were waiting.

The gravity of his face misled both of them. Celia sprang up with some appearance of consternation and asked, "Are they going to capture us?" Mrs. Townley's face asked the same

question, but its expression was more complex, and when Martin answered, "No, they've given it up and run for home," her eyes lowered and her lips pressed together.

From the first she had had the true bearings of the situation much better than her daughter, and while Celia had merely felt the pleasant excitement of the chase, she had seen all too clearly which way their own advantage lay. But in spite of herself her feelings were much like those of the girl. Her husband had told her when he purchased them how valuable to the cause would be the boxes of muskets in the hold, to say nothing of the rest of the cargo. She knew what enthusiasm would kindle in doubtful hearts when so proud a prize as the *Southern Cross* should be towed up the river and tied to the dock in Wilmington. And yet, while the issue was in doubt she had not been able to wish the vision to be realized. An affection for the ship, — yes, and for her Yankee master — had stood between her and her reason, but now that it was all over she reproached herself for her doubtful loyalty.

"We are giving you a great deal of trouble in getting rid of us, Captain Carver," she said uneasily.

"I did nothing that I wasn't glad to do." The tense of the verb and the seriousness of his

voice gave her a hint of what was coming, and even Celia looked up at him curiously.

"How long—" Mrs. Townley was trying to speak naturally, but she had difficulty in managing it—"how long will it take us to get back to where we were this afternoon? A good while, I suppose, against this wind?"

"We can't go back," he said.

"What do you mean?" cried Celia. "Why can't we go back?"

"I ought not to have gone in to-day. I didn't know how great the risk was; but I do know now, and I have no right to run it again."

"What are you going to do with us?" Mrs. Townley asked.

"We're sailing for New York."

"But *we* can't go to New York," said Celia, as though he did not understand. "We're Confederates, and they have gone to war with us. We *can't* go to New York."

He made no reply, except to shake his head. He sat facing them, but not looking at them. His hands were clasped on the table. There was a period of silence. At first sheer incredulity had held Celia quiet, but now this was wearing away and her excitement increased with every moment.

"Are you a coward, Captain Carver?" she burst out at last. "Were you so frightened by

three shots out of an old iron cannon that you don't care what becomes of us?"

He made no reply, not even by raising his eyes, not by a twitch of his muscles or a quiver in his regular breathing. It would have lessened her anger to have seen that her words hurt. His silence goaded her further.

"Perhaps," she said, "we haven't understood. Perhaps you're waiting —"

Then he raised his eyes, and they checked the words that were on her lips.

Martin slowly got to his feet. "Good night, Mrs. Townley," he said, and then went up on deck.

She took the girl in her arms and tried to quiet her. "Whatever they do to us we can show them that even Southern women are braver than they are."

Celia drew herself up quickly. "I wasn't thinking of that," she said. "I suppose they will do all they can think of. They're cowards, and they'll delight to torment a couple of women. We'll be tarred and feathered, perhaps. You won't care what they do, will you, mother?"

She tried to play the rôle of comforter herself, but presently her voice caught, and her lips quivered, and her head went back to its place in her mother's lap.

"He's just a Yankee, after all, Mummy," she said.

CHAPTER IV

THREE days later, when the *Southern Cross* had passed the Narrows and was towing up New York Bay, the steward knocked at Mrs. Townley's door and said Mr. Carver would like to see her.

"Very well," she answered; "I will come in a moment." She turned a little pale and looked over toward Celia.

"I'll go with you," said she. "It can't be so very bad, Mummy. And it will be better to know what is going to happen to us than to go on wondering as we've done for three days."

They had not seen Martin since that evening, off the coast of North Carolina, when he had told them that he would have to take them to New York with him. They came out into the cabin now, as coldly, as proudly, as in the days of the Terror the grand ladies of France had gone to the guillotine. Celia came first, her eyes fixed straight ahead of her. She would have scorned to lower them, but she hoped they might avoid an encounter with Martin Carver. Instead of him she saw a white-haired old gentleman, who bowed ceremoniously to her and to her

mother as Martin, from somewhere — Celia would not look — introduced him as his father. The captain then excused himself, and as in leaving the room he passed through Celia's field of vision and he looked at her, she — she could not do it — dropped her eyes. When she looked up at the old gentleman again, Martin was gone.

He looked like Martin's father. Twenty years of good living on land had not entirely obliterated the lean, rugged Carver look he had about him. His eyes were like Martin's, cool, gray, purposeful, but along with the likeness there was a marked difference. And there Celia stopped with a blush, realizing whom she was comparing him with, and began to listen to what he was saying.

"No doubt it seems a calamity to you, but we shall do what we can to make it as light as possible. It probably will not be long before we can send you back to your friends; in the meanwhile we shall try to take their places. You are to leave all the responsibility of the affair to me. It was my error which caused the accident, and it shall be my first concern to repair it. Our home will be yours until then."

Mrs. Townley had plenty of self-control, but the sudden revulsion of feeling which the import of Mr. Carver's words brought her almost made her giddy. Until now they had been standing.

The old gentleman cast a quick glance at her and placed a chair for her. "I hope," he said with grave concern, "that my son made it quite clear to you that you had nothing to apprehend beyond a vexatious delay in reaching home." The faces of both the women made part of the truth clear to him; and without waiting for words he went on, "He did it in a lubberly way, no doubt, but you must try to forgive him."

They thanked him as well as their bewildered condition would allow, and protested that they could not consider imposing upon his hospitality as he suggested. "Well, well," said he, "Mrs. Carver shall urge that matter. I expect her to be waiting at the wharf for us. I sent her word as soon as the ship was signalled. She is absurdly anxious about that precious boy of hers."

He insisted that they go on deck, for they were missing something that they should see. "I have sailed into all the great harbors in the world," he said, "and I know few more beautiful than this."

Going on deck meant an almost unavoidable encounter with Martin, but that must come soon in any event. He bowed gravely when they came in view, but did not join them until his father summoned him. Celia watched his progress across the deck with a good deal of embarrassment, but for all that she was distinctly

disappointed when her mother almost literally threw herself between them and carried the captain off, leaving her undisturbed to listen to old Mr. Carver's talk and to see the sights he was pointing out to her. She almost wished that her mother had been a little less successful.

Her attention wandered from Mr. Carver's talk, and seeing that, he ceased, though not abruptly, to make any demands on it.

A ferry-boat, bound for Jersey City, crossed under their stern and Celia, looking down into it, had her thoughts brought sharply back to her present surroundings.

"Soldiers!" she cried. Her eyes brightened for an instant with a simple girlish delight in the military. They were not very soldierly soldiers yet, this first regiment of New Hampshire Volunteers, but the uniforms, the colors, the blare of the band all were here. Whistles were screaming a wild salute to them, and six or seven of the *Southern Cross's* crew jumped into the rigging at sight of the flag and cheered it lustily.

But the color which had kindled in the girl's face and the light in her eyes faded quickly. She remembered against whom those men were going forth to fight. "Soldiers," she repeated softly.

The old man had been watching her unconscious face. Now he turned and angrily sum-

moned the men down from the shrouds. "Fools!" he said. "They cheer. When I was a boy I saw the battle-field at New Orleans when it was three days old. I have never cheered soldiers since."

He paused. Some great passion was at work behind his dark old face, and in a moment it burst forth. His arm swept over the city. "They don't know what it means," he cried. "They have run into it like sheep, herded by a pack of mad abolitionist curs."

Celia looked at him, wide-eyed. "Do many people in the North feel that way about it?" she asked.

"Not many, since Sumter," he answered dryly. A flag at half-mast caught his eye, and he pointed to it. "That is for Colonel Ellsworth. They buried him yesterday. He was the first."

Then he abandoned the subject abruptly and again showed her the sights they were passing, and Celia, if she only half heard, at least kept up the appearance of listening.

She was still trying to realize what had happened and where she was, and the attempt had not as yet met with more than indifferent success. Until her father's unexpected arrival in London had set this wild dance to going, she had lived all her life according to plan. Things

had happened as it had been expected they would happen, and after long prevision had made ready the way for them. Since then events had been as fantastic, as inconsequent, as anything that could have happened in a dream. The long voyage in the *Southern Cross* never seemed real; then her welcome home — the little river steamer she had made so many excursions in, coming out and firing cannon shots at her — would have been ridiculous if it had not seemed so tragic; and now, at last, the coming into captivity to find the enemy effusively friendly put the cap of absurdity upon the whole affair. And yet it was all very grim earnest.

Mrs. Carver was the first person to come aboard after the *Southern Cross* was alongside her wharf, and here Celia found what would have been a fresh surprise had she been in a state of mind where anything could surprise her. She was a gentle little lady, with gray hair and a sweet voice, and there was no resisting her. Going to live with her — a perfect stranger — seemed somehow a perfectly natural thing to do when she invited them.

In ten minutes Mrs. Townley and Celia were in love with her. And when Mrs. Carver, laying her hand proudly on her son's arm, said, "I hope my big boy has made your long voyage as comfortable as possible," Celia blushed to the hair.

What would this gentle lady think when she knew of that scene in the cabin, and of those last three days which had succeeded it? Apparently Martin had not told his father of it yet. Was it possible that he would not tell at all?

There were no half-tones in Celia's judgments; they were all done in black or white, and it really seemed as though the course of things had turned her from one extreme to the other and back again, just for the purpose of mocking her. Anyway, this much was clear to her, that she owed Martin an apology. It would not be a very effusive one. Somehow she still felt some resentment against him, owed him a grudge. Not for having brought her to New York; she saw now that he couldn't have done anything else, and she was not very sorry either that her voyage was leading her through such adventures. But he had deceived her,—that was what it came to,—he had allowed her uncontradicted to think the most ridiculous things about himself, his family, his Yankee neighbors. She had never told him what she thought, to be sure, but he might have known. He might have denied in so many words that his father was a beast, his neighbors a frenzied mob who would tear her and her mother limb from limb as soon as they stepped ashore. Well, not that exactly, but anyway he ought to have done

something. Celia seldom had any difficulty in "making a case," but this against Martin did not seem to prosper. She left it for the present and came back to the conversation of the others.

"Why isn't Winthrop here?" Mr. Carver was asking.

"I sent your messenger on to find him," said Mrs. Carver. "He won't be long after he knows that Martin has come home. But I don't think we need wait for him," she went on, turning to Martin. "He can find you at home if you're not here."

"Oh, I can't go up with you," said Martin. "I've a good deal of work down here before I can get away. I'll try to be up to dinner, but I can't promise even that."

"Then you have an incompetent mate," said John Carver, "and Mr. Jones has never been called that. Can't come to dinner! Nonsense!"

"We'll take you home at once," his wife said to Mrs. Townley and Celia. "You must be very tired. Oh, you needn't bring anything at all. Martin will have all your things sent up."

While they were preparing to leave the ship, Celia tried to get an opportunity to make her apology to Martin. She was only going to say, "I beg your pardon, Captain Carver." That would be ample justice. But the opportunity even for that did not come. Their light hand-

baggage was brought up on deck, and a sailor carried it ashore. Mr. Carver was already leading Mrs. Townley down the gang-plank. Mrs. Carver took her arm and started with her. But she was determined to make that apology before her case against Martin was undermined any further.

"Here comes Winthrop," said Mr. Carver. "Come along, boy, you were almost too late."

The other three were hesitating halfway down the plank, Martin still standing at the head of it. Celia turned resolutely and hurried back. The others were coming back, too, but more slowly.

She stepped in front of Martin and held out her hand. For some reason she looked up into his face before she spoke the little formula she had on her tongue. She stood so for an instant, silent. The formula had fled. Then, "I'm sorry," she said, not very steadily. "Will you please forgive me again?"

"My son, Winthrop, Miss Townley," said Mrs. Carver.

Winthrop made the fourth in the carriage when they drove home, Mr. Carver having offered some urgent business at his counting-house as an unconscious excuse for an uninterrupted hour with Martin, and it was due to this fact, perhaps, that Celia's first impression of the city was so vague. Winthrop was fully as interesting as Broadway, and much more so than any

of the other streets they saw. He was not a Carver at all, she thought. He was smaller, handsomer, more agile, alert, compact, than his father or Martin; and though Celia did not phrase it in just this way, she was soon aware that these differences were mental as well as physical.

She and her mother liked him at once. He did more to make them feel that they were among their own kind of people than any of the others, even Mrs. Carver herself, had so far been able to do. His manners were more like their own, fairly effusive as compared with Mr. Carver's or Martin's. He paid them all the easy, obvious, direct compliments which Northern men of intelligence seldom indulge in, but which are simply good manners in the South. It was he who disposed of their last protest against being forced to impose on the Carvers' hospitality.

"If the old *Cross* had kept you a month longer crossing the ocean, you wouldn't have felt that you were indebted to us for our hospitality, would you?" he asked laughingly. "Well, it comes to exactly the same thing. You must pretend that you aren't in any hurry at all, that you're having a fine time, and will be sorry when it's all over. And we have to pretend, I suppose, that we're trying our very best to get rid of you and pack you off to your friends. Of course, we're only human and we may not be trying as

hard as we seem to be. But whatever you suspect, you won't be allowed to complain."

The carriage pulled up before a large house on an old-fashioned but still fashionable square. There was nothing about the outside of it to reward Celia's curious glance, for it was exactly like scores — hundreds — of others they had passed on the way, and for the present it was evident also that she must content herself with only the most cursory acquaintance with the interior. Mrs. Carver was sure they must be tired, — and as regarded Mrs. Townley, she was quite right; their rooms were all ready for them and they might rest undisturbed until dinner-time.

"I haven't thought to ask before," said Mrs. Townley, "everything has been so surprising that I have taken it as a matter of course, — but how did you know we were coming?"

"Mr. Carver had a letter from Mr. Odell telling us you had sailed. The President proclaimed North Carolina under blockade the twenty-second of last month, so we knew you couldn't get in there, or that if you did Martin couldn't get out. We thought he would bring you here, and when they signalled the *Southern Cross*, we were almost sure you would be aboard. Everything has been ready for you here for two weeks. But I'll not keep you talking any longer. You must have your rest."

Celia did not much want to go — there were still too many things to see and hear about — but she went along obediently with her mother. She found she was tired after the excitement began to wear off, and she also found the solitary hours of value in that they made it possible to "take an observation" as she phrased it, proud of her newly acquired nautical phraseology. She had a good many matters to consider.

She was dressed for dinner a little before her mother, and she went down to the library, where Mrs. Carver had told her the family assembled, alone. It was a big room, — the whole second floor of the addition at the rear of the house; one entered it from a landing halfway up the stairway in the main hall.

In one of the window recesses she saw a man's figure. He was staring out, and some other sound in the house had prevented his hearing the rustle of her skirt. The well-remembered outline of his back was all she saw of him. For an instant she stood still.

She had hoped he might be waiting for her, waiting to tell her whether he had forgiven her — again — or not.

When she moved again he heard her and swung around. The thought that he had, for some reason, shaved his beard had almost time to form in her mind before she saw that

this was not Martin at all, but Winthrop. She gave a little gasp.

"I'm sorry I startled you," he said. "I shouldn't have moved so quickly. I was ruminating alone, and I guess I was a little startled myself."

He was a Carver now that neither his father nor his brother was by to serve as a standard for comparison. She wondered how she could have thought him small.

She was disappointed, of course, but it would not do to punish him on that account. It was easy to fall into talk with him, the kind of talk she was well accustomed to, and by dinner-time, when Martin and his father really did come in, they were already on very friendly terms.

That this first dinner did not prove a little stiff and uncomfortable was due more perhaps to Winthrop than to any one else. Every one at the table had tact of the negative sort which avoids treading forbidden ground and touching tender places, but when conversation threatened to flag under this rigorous editing, it was almost always Winthrop who set the ball in motion again.

Nevertheless, the one small hitch that occurred was clearly his own doing.

"Do you still sail the *Kate?*" Martin had asked him.

"Are *you* a sailor, too?" Celia demanded before he had time to reply. "Are you captain of something?"

Winthrop laughed. "No," he said, "I'm just a common landsman, the one landsman of the Carver family. They haven't had a disgrace like me for three generations."

Celia was conscious that both old Mr. Carver and his wife made a little movement, he of impatience, she of protest; but before either could speak, Winthrop went on:—

"No, the *Kate* was only a small but vicious cat-boat that I used to spend my holidays in. But she made so many attempts on my life that it grew to be a bore. I sold her last year, and now I sail in a small ark of a cutter that—well, I guess she'd even suit you, Martin."

"Winthrop would have me capsize the *Centaur* or the *Southern Cross*, just as he used to roll over in the *Kate* once or twice a week. He thinks I'm over cautious because I don't. Oh, you won't be able to make him see the difference, Mrs. Townley. He's determined not to."

It was a long time before Celia understood all that those words of Winthrop's signified to his father and his mother, all that he meant by them himself, but here, perhaps, is the best place to set it down in order.

Winthrop had had no hand in the selection of

his career; the great Christmas storm of '53 had decided the matter for him. Up to that time the beautiful fleet of White C clippers — they were named, all of them, from the stars or constellations, *Southern Cross*, *Centaur*, *Capella*, *Cygnus*, *Castor*, *Corona Borealis* — had never known a disaster. But in that storm the ship *Capella*, homeward bound and nearly home, went down with all on board, and carried with her the bodies of the two elder sons, John and Perry Carver.

Their mother had said good-by to them once, as only a year before to Martin also, bravely, as became the wife of an old sailor. She had seen that they must go, that their father's stories of the sea, that the sight so often before their eyes of the great three skysail yarders of the fleet making harbor or putting to sea, that the very blood in their veins, all called them imperiously to the blue water.

But Winthrop she had always hoped to keep, and after this disaster John Carver and his wife came to an express agreement that, though Martin should go on as he had begun, Winthrop's life, whatever happened, should not be staked in that perilous wager with death.

As for him, certainly it was pleasanter to go to Harvard, to be free, to have congenial companions and plenty of money than it would have

been to follow Martin's arduous course "over the bows."

That was very well while it lasted, but many a time since he had graduated in '60 and tried to settle down to the study of law he wished he had gone to sea, to California, that his work was anything but what it was. He and his father no longer fitted together comfortably in the close quarters of their small family.

Winthrop's mind was of the impractically idealistic sort which absorbs revolutionary ideas with extraordinary avidity, and the friends he had made at Harvard and about Boston had encouraged rather than checked this tendency in him. So he brought home a set of opinions regarding abolition and "nigger equality" which his father regarded as impious and incendiary. Winthrop kept them to himself as well as he could, but as the old man, who could see half an inch into a solid plank, speedily divined them, it might have been better if they had threshed the whole matter out and come to an understanding.

Winthrop, on his part, had divined something, too; namely, that his father regarded him as of rather softer metal than his brothers, as an effeminate creature who was not to be reckoned with in the serious affairs of life. The old man himself was hardly aware of the existence of this contempt; he never dreamed that

he was expressing it in a phrase, or in a more significant silence, every day.

But Winthrop understood all too well, and as time went on and he grew more sensitive to it, the sting grew more nearly intolerable. It was this rather than the irksomeness of his law studies which had driven him to his reckless sport in the *Kate*. The pleasure of reaching along in a gale, of shipping half a sea every now and then into his crazy little craft, was the only one which could salve the hurts his father unconsciously inflicted. Since he had sold the *Kate*, at a tearful entreaty from his mother, he had been denied even that.

It was she who held this ill-assorted pair together. For her the old man tried to tone down, if not to silence, his savage outbursts against the ideals and the leaders Winthrop had made his own, and for her Winthrop had made an even greater sacrifice.

Sumter and the call for volunteers were almost more than he could bear. A dozen times he told her he must go.

Her answer always was, "You must go, of course, when your country needs you. But you will cut the link between you and your father if you go. It will break up our home. So do not go until you are sure the time has come. I am praying it may never come."

And, as yet, Winthrop had not gone.

Of course only the merest fraction of this situation was even guessed at by Celia. But she saw, even in the good-natured talk about the table, that there was a rift in the relations between Winthrop and his father, and Winthrop's speech about being a landsman gave her just enough of a hint to waken her sympathies for him.

She would have had less inclination for speculating over the riddle had Martin been less absorbed with his father. She said to herself that she did not expect him to be anything else, of course, but still her determination to be very nice to poor Mr. Winthrop was strengthened a little by the fact that during that first evening Martin had not made a chance for a quiet word quite alone with her.

PART II

MONDAY, JULY TWENTY-SECOND

CHAPTER V

When the Townleys arrived in New York, within a day or two of the first of June, the first convulsion of anger, the fierce excitement which all over the North had followed the attack on Sumter, had subsided. New York city had had its full share of this excitement: it had deliriously welcomed the Sixth Massachusetts when it went through the city on its way to the front, via Baltimore; it had sent off its own darling Seventh; it had heard the chimes in Trinity steeple playing Yankee Doodle; it had packed as much of its great self as possible into Union Square to hear the silver-haired Senator Baker, with his flaming tongue, pleading that they avenge the flag; it had agonized during those interminable hours when no word came from Washington; it had joined full voiced in the cry of the whole North that chastisement should be dealt out speedily and with no faltering hand.

But by the end of May had begun the inevitable quieting down. The regiments which New England was still pouring through the streets, the arming of ferry-boats, tugs, anything which moved by steam for service in the blockade, the

roar of the cupolas when they were casting cannon, the beating of the ploughshare into the sword, all the grim business which could be seen going forward on every hand, had fallen into a routine of its own, and the stupendous fact of war, though still unrealized, began to be taken as a matter of course.

In the Carver family, however, this readjustment had not taken place. The tension was great, almost unbearable; the feeling was in the air that before very long something must break.

It arose, of course, between the old man and his younger son. There was a strong bond between them; the strain would be terrible before it would be broken, but break it must some day.

John Carver's ideas about the war, which had so astonished Celia, had, up to the attack on Sumter, been held by many conservative men through all the North, and in New York city by a really considerable proportion of the "solid men." That Carver himself had not been swept away in the mighty wave of the fourteenth of April, the wave which carried along the strong and silenced the timorous, was, after all, natural enough when one considers the sort of man he was.

All the forces that played upon him drew in one direction. He had gone his own way,

followed his own judgment, taking the chances it approved, and the event had always justified the course he had taken. He had, indeed, learned to obey once, but ever since that remote day he had exacted obedience to his own absolute authority; it had been paid him by his crews, his clerks, his captains, and his four lean, big-jawed sons. In all those years he never felt discipline, either from men or events.

To such a man, slavery could hardly seem wicked; he was too well accustomed to it under another name. Add to this the fact that he never wasted his time with abstract questions, that he had many friends and a great deal of trade through the South, that, like the true, conservative, successful man of commerce that he was, he made an idol of "things as they are," and it will be readily understood how the ten years of anti-slavery agitation before the war infuriated him, and how intolerably bitter it was that his son should be heart and soul with the agitators. And when his mind was fully made up, his sympathies fully enlisted, he was not to be moved.

On Monday morning, July twenty-second, the boy who delivered John Carver's daily paper left, by mistake, the *Tribune* instead of the *Daily News*, a fact which Mr. Carver discovered when he opened it in the bus on his way to his office. As he read the black headlines his face dark-

ened. He crumpled the paper together, but in a moment he opened it again and began reading.

It announced a great victory of the Union arms the day before at Bull Run, the greatest battle that had ever been fought on the American continent. It gave the details of the fierce struggle, the rout of the disunion forces, told that General Beauregard had sent McDowell a flag of truce which the Federal general had refused to receive unless it offered an unconditional surrender.

There was no malice in John Carver's regret of a Union victory. The South had a right to secede, to go by itself if it chose. Force could not bring it back. A temporary success for the North could only make the struggle longer, costlier, bloodier. It could have but one ending, and he hoped the end would come soon. The present state of things, if prolonged, meant ruin.

His own business was at a standstill. The *Southern Cross* and the *Corona* were tied to their wharves unable to get a cargo, practically unable to get insurance, since Confederate privateers were scouring the seas ready to pounce upon and make prizes of them. The *Centaur* was due, overdue, from San Francisco, and when she came in, if she came at all, her case would be the same. Trade, except in the veriest neces-

sities, was paralyzed. The cotton-mills would soon be closed. And now, after this victory, the North might keep up the useless struggle for six months. President Lincoln was already enlisting soldiers for three years, but no one but the abolitionist fanatics could expect that the war would last as long as that.

There lay on his desk a letter addressed in the familiar hand of Mr. Patrick Odell; evidently this week there was something beyond the advices which regularly came from his head clerk. As soon as John Carver, with a certain leisurely haste, could get through the two or three duties which were part of an iron routine with him, he opened and read it.

It opened with some matters of rather unimportant business, but soon proceeded to a discussion of the war — guardedly, of course, for the writer knew well how sore John Carver was on the subject.

"I congratulate you, by the way," it read, "that the *Southern Cross* is safe in port. If she had sailed a month later, it is not unlikely that the *Sumter* would have got her. We over here have heard a good deal of her achievements in the Caribbean, and are wondering what the result of them will be. I hope none of your other ships are in the range of Semmes's activities. Another question — "

John Carver laid down the letter and looked thoughtfully out of the window. It was not the first time the idea had been suggested to him that the *Sumter* might be accountable for the *Centaur's* delay in reaching port, but it weighed heavier now with him than it had before. After a few minutes he shook his head and returned to Mr. Odell's letter.

"Another question, which I find still more interesting, is the proposed blockade — or is it a real thing by this time? It is a heroic idea, at least, this blockading of a thousand miles of coast. No one but an American could have seriously thought of such a thing. That's not saying it can't be done, either. But *when* it's done — that's the point.

"Of course there will be a cotton famine over here, and the spinners, if they don't starve to death, will at least get thinner than foxes. And we shall see cotton bringing anywhere from sixpence to two shillings a pound in Liverpool. It may bring almost anything. But do you see the other side of it? What will cotton be worth on the wharf in Charleston, shut up inside of the blockade? Anything you choose to give for it. And what would shoes and clothing and hardware be worth, lying alongside of that cotton? Anything you choose to ask for it.

"You may say that if the cotton could be

brought out it wouldn't be cheap and if the shoes could be brought in they wouldn't be dear, and that I'm talking a contradiction in terms. That's partly true, entirely true, so far as ordinary ocean carriers go. If half a dozen cruisers were lying off every Southern harbor, neither a sailing ship nor a clumsy, creaking, splashing steamer could get in nor out. The ports would be sufficiently blockaded and the state of things I have described would ensue.

"But the other day I saw on the Clyde a long, low, thin snake of a craft sliding down the river as quiet as a ghost, and it came to me that with the aid of a bold man and a dark night three times in four she could get through any blockade that Mr. Lincoln can make. If she could make it three times, you could afford to lose her the fourth. I think it will be fully as profitable as that. It will be easy to get the steamer if the occasion arises. The trick will be to get the man."

There was more to the letter, but Mr. Carver had paused in his reading and was again frowning out of the window, when voices in his outer office and the tramp of many feet caught his attention. There was a gruff question, an answer from one of his clerks, and without ceremony the door was flung open.

"Dearborn!" cried John Carver. The un-

wonted informality in thus addressing a captain was as significant as the note of relief in his voice. "How did you get the *Centaur* in without reporting her?"

The captain had stopped a pace within the door. He was a short, solidly built man with a red face and a neck like a bull's. Indeed, the resemblance went further, for he stood with his head thrust forward and rolling a little from side to side.

"What's the matter with you, man?" Carver demanded. "Why wasn't she signalled?"

With an effort Captain Dearborn met his commander's eyes. "She'll never be signalled again, sir," he said. "She's lost."

"You lost her? *You!*" thundered John Carver.

"She was took!" Dearborn's voice was shaking with anger and at last broke away from him. "She was took by a crew of damned pirates. They burnt her — may they swing from a yard and burn in hell for it! They burnt her!"

"Stop cursing," said John Carver, "and tell me what you mean. Who burnt her?"

"It was Semmes, sir, in the old *Habana*. They've mounted an eight-inch gun on her, and they call her the *Sumter*. They sighted us not far off Barbadoes, and signalled us to heave to

with a solid shot across our bows. It was near dark, and with a little more breeze we'd have given her the slip. But the breeze fell and she came up with us. They made us leave her and go aboard the *Sumter*, and then they took what they wanted out of her and set her afire. It was dark by then and we could see her blazing for miles. They tried to enlist us in their damned 'navy,' as they call it, but they didn't get a man; so they took our parole and put us ashore at San Juan. We got over to Havana and so up here. We've all come back together, and we're going to try to get exchanged so we can enlist — regular — and square accounts with him. And if we don't get exchanged — I can't speak for anybody but myself, but much good may my parole do him!"

It had only been by the greatest exercise of self-control that Captain Dearborn had been capable of so matter-of-fact, consecutive a report, and when, as he finished, he saw John Carver fling out his hand in a furious gesture, his own rage against the *Sumter* and her crew burst forth again, volcanic, lurid. It was a fine, deep anger, despite its facile expression.

But the look in John Carver's fierce old face checked it in full torrent. "They are not to blame," he cried. He had risen from his chair and was speaking not only to Dearborn but to

the little group — the three mates and a seaman or two from the *Centaur* — who were gathered in the open doorway. His voice vibrated with a perfectly savage intensity.

"They are not to blame. I have seen ships burn myself, yes, and have burned them. Don't curse them. Curse the men who drove them to it. Curse the cowardly abolitionists who started this war! Curse *them* with all your hearts!"

It took a bold man to say such words aloud in that city and on that day. They rang in the ears of men too completely astonished, confounded, to understand or fully to credit the understanding when it came. There was a moment of electrical silence; then, striding two paces nearer, John Carver went on: —

"Now, take that as you like. You can think what you please. You can be fools if you please. But understand this. The man — master, mate, or seaman — who enlists in the navy or the army either, or who tries to enlist, will never sail under my flag again."

They were all brave men in that little group, but they lowered their eyes and gave way before this onslaught. Even the captain, the truculent captain, could not find his voice. It was not the threat that produced the effect, nor the sight — the towering figure and the blazing eyes — of

him who uttered it. But his long usage of authority, his habit of command, his *place*, affected their imagination and they slunk away from him.

All but one! He was a common sailor, elected by his mates of the port watch to help represent the crew at this extraordinary conference. Somehow he saw things in a simpler relation. He shouldered forward, past the officers, past Captain Dearborn himself, and stood facing old John Carver, eye to eye. He stretched out a steady hand and pointed it at his face.

"You damned old rebel!" he cried, "do you think we care for your flag? Go sell it to Jeff Davis. We sail under the Stars and Stripes!"

John Carver moved as if to strike him. Then his arms fell at his side. The sailor had kept his attitude unchanged, the arm outstretched, the finger pointing. Then he straightened back, spat contemptuously on the floor, turned on his heel, and deliberately made his way to the street door.

One by one, in silence, the others followed him, some grinning approval, waiting to offer him a drink when they got outside, but the others, the men of long service in the fleet, still shamefaced, depressed, avoiding each other's eyes, as

though they had witnessed a sacrilege. The young sailor had only voiced the protest that had arisen in their own hearts, but still they steered away from him in the street, to his own intense disgust.

"You're all secesh, that's the matter with you," he growled. There was no hedge of divinity about him, certainly, and, with a sob of relief, the third mate knocked him down out of hand.

Left alone, after dismissing his head clerk, who came to see if anything had gone wrong, John Carver returned to his desk and tried to read the rest of Mr. Odell's letter, though he was not in condition to make much of it.

It is said, with some appearance of authority, that no absolute ruler is ever really sane; that his abnormal relations with his fellow-humans destroys the balance of his mind. Some such fact as this may account, in part, for John Carver's state. He was not yet an old man; with his immense vitality he ought to live another score of years. His interest was as fully in the present and the future, his perception was as quick, his memory as automatic, as ever it had been. But surely his actions this morning had had the marks of senility on them. All his life since he came to manhood he had, periodically, given way to bursts of unrestrained anger, but none of them had ever shaken him as this had. For it was

this anger and the young sailor's contumacy, rather than the loss of his ship, that affected him most. The really important fact he as yet hardly realized.

He lost track of the time as he sat there fumbling over his letter and was not recalled to it until his clerk came in and asked if he might go to his dinner. At that he started like a person who has been asleep, found his hat and cane, and walked home, still in something of a daze.

The Townleys had not yet succeeded in getting off. All mails to the South were stopped the day of their arrival, so their only way, if there was a way, of getting into communication with Mr. Townley was through Mr. Odell in London. They wrote at once, but got a reply from Mr. Odell saying that Mr. Townley had sailed a week before for Nassau, where he hoped to find a chance to dodge through the blockade in some sort of craft. He had of course been unable to have any line of communication open to him from Mr. Odell. He had sailed with the confident expectation that his wife and daughter were safe in Wilmington.

During the three or four weeks which had elapsed since the receipt of this news, many letters had been written, various expedients tried, to inform him of their whereabouts, but as yet with no success whatever. So Mrs. Townley and

Celia had stayed on from day to day and week to week, hoping that something might turn up, but until it did quite powerless to do anything but stay. Meanwhile they were not unhappy, for the mutual affection between them and the Carvers kept their unavoidable obligation to them from being a burdensome one.

When John Carver reached home, a little later than usual, he found his wife, Winthrop, and Mrs. Townley waiting for him in the library. Mrs. Townley's face and what he took to be the traces of weeping in it acted strongly to bring him to himself again. She made Celia's excuses, saying her daughter had a headache and could not come down to lunch. It touched him to think of the forlornness of their case, away from all their friends, in the enemy's country, and the enemy all about them rejoicing in a crushing victory over their friends and brothers. He exerted himself to show them every consideration, and the exertion did him good.

Martin had not yet come home, but they sat down to lunch without waiting for him. He came in soon, however, very grave, and silently took his place at the table.

"You have no word for us from my husband, I suppose," Mrs. Townley asked of Mr. Carver.

"No, I had a letter from Mr. Odell to-day, but as yet he has heard nothing. The blockade he

says is improving and very little gets through, even in the way of news. He looks for some attempt, before long, to break it, — some regular attempt. It that case we shall be able not only to get word of him to you, but to take you safely through to him."

Winthrop was looking across the table at Martin. He had noted his gravity, his silence; now he saw that he had eaten nothing. "Is something wrong?" he asked.

Martin glanced up at him in astonishment, and then swiftly around the table, looking from one face to another.

"Can it be possible that you haven't heard the news?" he said.

"The news?" demanded his father. Then quickly, "Yes, we've heard it, of course."

Martin looked at him keenly. "The news of yesterday's battle?" he asked slowly.

His mother laid her hand on his reprovingly. "Yes, yes, dear." She gave him a meaning look and moved her head slightly toward Mrs. Townley.

"No," cried Martin. "I'm sure you haven't. I don't mean the report in this morning's papers. That was a mistake."

"Tell us, quick," said Winthrop, hoarsely. And Mrs. Townley's eyes made the same appeal.

"Our troops were winning during the after-

noon. So far the papers were right. But Johnston's army had escaped from Patterson, and it came on the field about five in the afternoon. They took our men in flank. There was a panic and — it isn't over yet. The army's destroyed. They lost about two thousand men killed. The rest have melted away. They are coming across the Potomac bridge into Washington in droves."

Winthrop covered his face with his hands. "My God!" he groaned. The two women, to whom the news had such different import, took it alike, both very pale and breathing a little quickly, but making no other sign.

The expression on the old man's face was complex, inscrutable, until he looked across at Winthrop's lowered head, when there came, clear to see, the light of anger in it.

"It's nothing to cry about," he said sharply, brutally. "It's good news to one who understands it. The two thousand have saved the lives of a great many thousands more. The abolitionists have had enough. They have learned their lesson. It's well they learned it so soon. This will be the end."

At his first words Winthrop looked up, his whole face ablaze. None of the Carvers were of the sort to turn pale and speak soft with anger. Their rages were of the more primitive

sort that set their hearts to pounding and gave their voices the timbre of trumpets.

Yet as the lad — for he was little more — faced his father the color died out of his face and left him white. His hands shook and he clutched tightly the edge of the table to steady them. He was no more a coward than Captain Dearborn, who had shrunk and shuffled in the old man's office that morning. He had reached the point of mutiny.

"We have learned our lesson," he said very slowly, his lips trembling so that he could hardly speak at all. "But this is just the beginning. The end will not come until the end of slavery comes. If it takes every life we've got, it will not end till then. We are called to answer for our crimes against our brothers."

"Remember our guests, whatever you are," thundered the old man.

"Remember yourself." The words came faster and there was a passionate gesture to drive them home. "What you have said is treason. And if you meant what you said, you are a traitor."

CHAPTER VI

There was a long moment of silence; then, with all their eyes on him, Winthrop thrust back his chair, rose not very steadily, and went out of the room. Even after he disappeared the others were turned toward the empty doorway; a feeling quite as strong in Martin and his mother as in Mrs. Townley kept them from looking at the old man.

John Carver's first emotion, after Winthrop's outburst, had been clear astonishment, for the boy's admirable self-control hitherto had misled him; but that was gone in an instant, and before Winthrop had finished speaking a wave of uncontrolled anger succeeded it. Then had come the moment of silence before his rage could find an outlet in words.

Two such passions in one day are more than most men of sixty-five can safely subject themselves to. John Carver, from boyhood to his later forties, had led an unusually active life, from then on a completely sedentary one, and such a change is not to be made with impunity. He had had no warning of the danger, though a physician might have noted that the coarse red

which had come in his cheeks during these late years was not the flush of health his friends mistook it for, and would no doubt have advised him against extremes both of exertion and excitement.

He had moved back his own chair a little, as if he meant to follow Winthrop out of the room, the words which for a moment had been denied him were on his lips — and then the blow was struck.

His face went purplish white, the sweat beaded out on it, then came a look of terror in his eyes. With a groan he clapped his hands to his heart and bent forward over the table.

Mrs. Carver was at his side in an instant, trying in vain to discover what had happened. Martin was scarcely behind her, and after a moment he gathered the old man up in his great arms and carried him to a sofa in the parlor, which was on the same floor. Then he ran around to the stable and set the coachman clattering off on the bare back of one of the carriage horses to find a doctor. He shut the stable door after him and went back and stood with his mother over the writhing figure on the sofa.

There was very little they could do, for they knew nothing of the nature of his malady and dared not give him the brandy he moaned for. Rather because inaction was so terrible, than in

any hope that it would do good, they began putting hot cloths on his chest.

The paroxysms of pain did not abate at all at first, but dreadful as they were to see, they were not as dreadful as the old man's terror.

He had faced death many times and in many visages, coolly, almost contemptuously. He had worked his ship inch by inch off a perilous lee shore when every sheet and brace, every stick and spar, had the weight of all their lives hanging upon it. He would, it is likely, have faced the certainty of that death as steadily as he faced what was so little less. But this new enemy, who laid an invisible hand upon his heart and tore at it, unmanned him.

Gradually the grip relaxed. When the doctor came it was quite gone. Martin slipped out while he made his examination, and lay in wait for him on the front steps. He was not a great while coming.

"Oh, here you are," he said, perceiving Martin. "Get into my carriage, can't you? And come along with me a little. I want to talk to you.

"It must be three years since I've seen you," he went on. "I'd an idea lately that your brother Winthrop was growing to look like you, but I see I'm mistaken. You're like your father, though, in some ways."

"I wanted to ask you about him," Martin began.

"Yes, yes," the doctor interrupted. "We'll get around to him directly. You've not enlisted yet, I see. Were you planning to go?"

"After to-day's news I thought I would," said Martin. "I meant to speak to father about it this afternoon."

"You won't do that, of course. And I advise you to wait a little longer, anyway."

There was a long pause, and then the doctor spoke again.

"There's no doubt at all about the nature of your father's attack. It was what we call *angina pectoris*. It's a heart affection. There's usually some organic lesion of the heart at the bottom of it. In a day or two when everything's quieted down, I'll make a thorough examination and see if I can find what it is. But that's not the point. When a man has had such a seizure as this he's likely to have another, and eventually to have one that will prove fatal.

"The organic lesion, if there is one, may not trouble him for years, but this angina may strike again at any moment. Excitement is more likely than anything else to bring it on in his case. From now on any violent passion is likely to kill him. I shall tell him so myself, but that won't do much good, or I've been mistaken about John Carver all these years. These are exciting times, and he takes things hard. You and your

mother must do what you can to keep him quiet. It's literally true that his life depends on it."

The carriage pulled up at a house where the doctor was to make a visit. The doctor gave Martin a prescription, told him where to have it filled, and was about to go into the house. "I'll tell you, though," he said, "I've taken you a long way from home. My man can drive you back while I'm in here."

"If there's no hurry I'll walk, I think," said Martin.

"That's better," said the doctor. "And I'll give you one piece of advice for yourself. If you quit the sea, as your father did, don't quit exercising. When a man has developed big lungs and a strong heart, he has either got to give them something to do or they'll play the mischief with him. That's all."

On his way back to the house it occurred to Martin for the first time to wonder what had become of Winthrop, — where he had gone after his sudden exit from the dining room. The lawyer's office where he was studying was not far out of his way, and quickening his pace to make up for the delay he went around there. They told him Winthrop had not yet come back from lunch. There was no time to look farther, indeed there was nowhere else to look, so Martin hurried on home.

He found his father sitting up in a big easy-chair, stubbornly declaring his intention to go back to his office that afternoon, and fretting against his wife's protests that he must keep quiet and ought to keep to his bed for several days.

He seemed to have aged ten years since morning. He was haggard from pain, weak, nervous, altogether out of tune. Martin was disposed at first to side with his mother, but presently he changed his mind about it. For some reason their resistance seemed to excite the old gentleman greatly. That was due, probably, to some dregs of the terror he had felt during the seizure. He was protesting that it had meant nothing — protesting too much — to restore his courage. At all events he must not excite himself any further.

"If you can walk as far as the carriage, I don't see why you shouldn't go," Martin said at last. "There's an easy-chair in your office and a sofa. I'd go with you, of course, but then I don't see why you should go, either."

"It's not necessary that you should see," said his father, curtly.

Martin submitted. "Shall I send for the carriage, sir?" he asked.

More than once as they drove down town Martin regretted that he had not kept his father safe within doors. The excitement in the streets

that afternoon was intense. The revulsion from rejoicing over yesterday's victory to deploring yesterday's disaster manifested itself on every corner; you could not look this way or that without seeing something that recalled the very things that John Carver must be prevented from thinking about at all. But though the old man's silence gave Martin no clew to his thoughts, he seemed quite unaware of the excitement that was throbbing all about him. When they reached the office, he walked so much more steadily than before that it appeared that his ride had done him good.

Patrick Odell's letter was still lying on the desk, and John handed it to his son. "Read it," he said. Then, "Read it aloud. It will bear a second hearing."

When Martin reached Odell's expression of the hope that none of the White C ships was within the range of the *Sumter's* activities, his father interrupted him.

"We've lost the *Centaur*," he said. "Semmes took her a month ago. Dearborn reported this morning."

"Lost her!" cried Martin, incredulously. "Lost the *Centaur?*"

"Yes, yes," his father answered impatiently. "There's no use whimpering over it. It can't be helped."

For the first time in Martin's life occurred to his mind the possibility that the fortune his father had been building year by year, the fortune which had been so amply founded during his own boyhood, which he had seen growing so steadily since, might now, at the end, come tumbling about the ears of the already broken man who had given his life to it. He sat thoughtfully silent over the idea until his father's voice recalled him.

"Well, well, read on. You've only begun."

For a little way Martin read lifelessly, but before long the easily apparent drift of Odell's speculations about the blockade of the Southern ports caught him.

"'The trick is to get the man.'" It was here that Captain Dearborn's entrance had interrupted his father's reading. "'Whether he is the right man or not would make all the difference between a great profit and a great loss. I said a bold man. Such, of course, may be found on every four corners. But there needs a particular blend of caution with recklessness for this business which is rare at best. Add to this that your man must have a particular and minute knowledge of all that difficult coast from St. Mary's to Hatteras and you reduce the number still further. Indeed, my doubt as to whether it is possible at all to secure any man fit to con-

duct the enterprise, is the only question I entertain as to its entire feasibility. Will you turn the matter over in your mind, and if any man occurs to you, take care not to forget him? I don't ask you to write me, because I expect to sail for New York in a week or two myself, on some other business. Then we can talk it over in detail.

"'Has your son, Captain Martin, put to sea again? If not, I should like to get his judgment on the matter. He might know of some one exactly to our purpose.'"

Then, with remembrances and a number of "and so forths," the letter ended. Martin had hardly laid it down when there came a knock at the office door. A fancy that he had recognized the step as it approached made him spring to the door in time to prevent his father's summons to come in.

He opened the door cautiously. He had guessed right. It was Winthrop. There was no time for half measures, so he crowded out through as narrow an opening as possible and shut the door after him.

"You here?" said Winthrop.

"Come in, both of you," fretted the old man. "What are you palavering about? Come in." Winthrop obeyed promptly, and Martin followed him.

He had no time to explain, even to give a hint of the situation, and now he was powerless, for even if he had possessed a knack for pantomime, which he conspicuously lacked, he was equally with Winthrop under his father's eye. He could do nothing but look on at this scene, and he fell back a pace or two.

Winthrop's face and bearing were not very reassuring, but Martin almost lost his fears in his admiration. A detailed description of this youngest son's features, except the eyes, would have done very well for any of his three brothers as they had been at his age, but in him alone of the four was the ruggedness of the father's frame veiled, softened by the mother's beauty. Again, except for his eyes, it was a number of minute differences, a more delicate chiselling about the nostrils, a mitigation of the characteristic lower jaw, a finer texture of the skin, that set him apart from the rest of them. It was by no means a weak face, but his father, misled as others were sometimes, by the comparison with Martin and the memory of John and Perry, thought it was.

His beauty had never been so striking as it was to-day. He was paler than usual and his black eyes were brighter; too bright indeed and restless, though he was holding them pretty steadily on his father.

The old man returned his look for a moment, then swung round in his chair toward the desk. "Well, well," he demanded, "have you something to say?

"I came back, sir, to tell you that I've enlisted in the navy." He said it simply, not at all defiantly, but there was a fine, clear, martial tone about it, none the less.

Martin held his breath while he watched his father during those next few seconds. As to his thoughts, he was actively calculating, from his father's position, which way he would be most likely to fall when the explosion of wrath that must be coming brought back the heart paroxysm with it.

But the explosion did not come; there was nothing left to explode. John Carver had exhausted, for that day, his capacity for anger. He drummed on his desk in an irritated sort of way. "I'm not surprised," was all he said.

Winthrop, too, had expected an explosion, had steeled himself against it, and the petulant nonresistance of the reply disturbed his balance sadly.

"I know that goes against your wishes," he rejoined.

"The less said about that the better," grumbled his father. But Winthrop went on, his words coming quicker and hotter as he proceeded: —

"Your opinion and mine differ at almost every

point. I've been deferring to yours all my life. I suppose I should go on doing so if it were simply a question between you and me. I've not forgotten that you're my father, and I know how much I owe you, but — "

Martin did not dare to let it go further. "That's all right, Winthrop — " he began.

Winthrop's face kindled, and the muscles in it twitched as if in a spasm of pain. So this was where Martin stood! This was Martin's loyalty!

"I've got this much more to say," he cried, "and I'll say it to you or to anybody, — that every man who could strike a blow for his country, now when she calls to him, and who holds his hand is as much of a traitor and less of a man than the one who strikes straight at her life. I'm going out to the receiving ship to-night. Good-by to both of you."

He ended with something very like a sob, and strode out of the room. Martin followed him. Winthrop heard, but only quickened his pace, and Martin did not overtake him until they reached the street door. Then, taking him by the shoulders, he turned him round.

Winthrop would have wrenched himself away, but the quiet, commanding power of the great hands on his shoulders and of the steady gray eyes fixed on his own, which were blurred with tears of anger and excitement, denied resistance.

"Winthrop, old man, you don't understand," he began.

And then again from the inner room came the old man's voice, fretful, peremptory. "Martin! Come back in here, will you?"

"I must go," said Martin, quietly. "Ask mother to tell you what has happened. Good-by."

Winthrop yielded him his hand, but there was no response in it to Martin's pressure. He went his way, and the elder brother, very thoughtful, answered his father's call.

CHAPTER VII

The obvious resemblances and the equally obvious differences between Martin and Winthrop invited comparisons, and, with the exception of their mother, who was the only person who really understood them both, every one from the most casual acquaintances to their own father, indulged this tendency to set one up against the other and strike some sort of balance between them.

Mrs. Townley had reasons of her own for making a comparison, and she was not long in reaching the conclusion that Winthrop, with his patrician face, his gayety, his tact, the suggestion of a reckless, devil-may-care defiance in his manner — a rather formidable total — was much more likely than his sober elder brother to disturb the peace of mind of a not unimpressionable and very much unoccupied young girl. She had not completed her first day in New York before she decided that it was fortunate that Martin was the one about to enjoy the leisure of a vacation while Winthrop must go on with his law books and the routine of an attorney's clerk.

That consolation did not last long. Mr. Carver could hardly let Martin out of his sight. They spent whole days together at the counting-house; they lunched, they drove, they dined together; and the young captain was led about the whole circle of the old captain's friends, offered for approval and duly approved. Meanwhile the one unoccupied person in the family, in spite of the irksomeness of his legal researches, appeared to be Winthrop, and it was not long before appearances justified the mother in feeling uneasy. Celia's behavior was rather baffling. She took Winthrop's outspoken admiration very easily, and to her mother she often expressed her sympathy for him more frankly than she would have been likely to do had there been any deeper feeling underlying it. But there was no denying that she often seemed uneasy, sometimes unhappy, and in many little ways unlike herself.

One evening, a month, perhaps, after their arrival in New York, her mother found her in tears for which she would give no explanation but on which the events of the day seemed to supply a commentary. The *Corona* had just come in from a long voyage, — her last, as it proved, — and as she was the newest and largest ship in the fleet, at Mrs. Carver's suggestion, Celia and her mother, escorted by Winthrop, and, for a

wonder, by Martin, too, had that day gone down to pay her a visit.

Noting the purposeful way in which Winthrop set about getting Celia away from the others and his evident intention to have her all to himself, Mrs. Townley took a hand in the manœuvre, and as her hand in such matters was a light but a very sure one, "poor Mr. Winthrop" met a sad tactical reverse. He accompanied the elder woman all over the ship, not quite able to see how it had come about that it was impossible to do anything else but perfectly aware who was responsible for it.

On their starting for home Martin had pleaded an engagement with his father, and Mrs. Townley drove back in the carriage, with two very silent, and, to her mind, rather sullen, young people. And then, that night, the tears! One cannot wonder that having taken the wrong clew to start with she was led far astray.

When Mrs. Townley carried Winthrop off that afternoon, Celia guessed for the first time the existence and the nature of her mother's suspicions, and she smiled over the absurdity of them. Winthrop was a very nice boy, and she liked him, of course; everybody did. If she had been a good deal younger, she supposed she might have fallen in love with him — a little. But to imagine that she was taking his attentions seriously

was every bit as absurd as to think he meant them so. They understood each other perfectly.

The smile lingered in her eyes until Mrs. Townley and her involuntary escort disappeared. Then with a comprehensive little gesture she turned toward Martin.

"Now show me everything," she said.

They had seen very little of each other, except in company with the rest of the family, since coming to New York, and the few occasions when they had been alone had not been very satisfactory. The memory of certain days on the *Southern Cross* embarrassed them both, and besides that Celia had easily guessed that from the first Martin was laboring in the same error in which she had just discovered her mother. That was awkward, of course, and unfortunate, but Celia could think of nothing she could do to help it.

But to-day, on the *Corona*, everything was in their favor. The familiar sights about the ship awakened the memory of the old intimacy which had grown up between them during their long days on the *Southern Cross*, and unconsciously they acknowledged it.

They had the place quite to themselves, for the ship's cargo was discharged, her crew paid off, and except for the old watchman who was showing Mrs. Townley and Winthrop about she

was deserted. So, according to Celia's demand, Martin took her everywhere; that is, wherever her "crinoline" would permit her to go, and into some places where, at first glance, it would not permit. By a little engineering they got down into the forecastle.

"And do you mean to say," she demanded, "that you make the whole crew sleep down here?"

"When they're lucky enough to have time to sleep at all," he answered. "And I'll tell you that every sailor who ever signed for a voyage on this ship blessed his luck when he brought his chest down here and took a look around. If I had seen a forecastle like this when I was shipping before the mast, I'd have thought I'd got into passengers' quarters by mistake. That wasn't in our line, the White C, you know. The holes we used to sleep in were enough —"

"You!" she cried. Then after a little pause, and very seriously, she said, "I knew of course that you'd been a sailor, but I never realized — Won't you tell me about it? You've told me so little."

"You'd better come up on deck first. I don't believe you find it very pleasant down here."

"No, I shall stay right here. It will sound truer than it would on deck. Up there it would be like reading it in a book, but in this place —"

She seated herself, rather gingerly it is true, on the edge of a bunk. "Now begin," she said.

Following a very just instinct Martin told her none of the wonders of his voyages, none of the wild, true tales which have made sailors' yarns a byword for extravagance, but the little commonplaces which went to make up the day's work, — the grub, the hazing, the petty tyrannies, the childish amusements, the long expectation of liberty day ashore and the inevitable disappointment it always proved to be when it came.

He made rather light of it all at first, but soon fell in with her mood, which was sober. After he had finished she sat silent awhile, and it was not until he again suggested that they go back on deck that she spoke.

"But all the while you knew who you were," she said. "And you knew why you were down here. You let them do all those things to you because you chose."

"Not exactly. Oh, I knew of course — with my head, but you often forget what you know that way. I got so that I didn't know it with my feelings. That comes back over me sometimes. It has down here to-day — perhaps from talking about it. I feel as if I hadn't any right to be talking to you."

"Let's go back on deck," she said, without the laugh he expected.

When they had engineered their way out into the air again, she led the way aft to the quarter-deck. Then she smiled, a rather sober little smile, and asked, "You're not afraid of me now, are you — Captain?"

His thoughts seemed a long way off and she, guessing them or merely giving play to her own, began talking to him as if they were out at sea, asking how many knots they had logged that day, if he thought there was a storm coming up, and when he was going to wear ship again.

"I shall never get over that," he said, pointing forward. "I'm just a sailor, and I ought never to come ashore." Then, with a vehemence that startled her, "Ah, how I'd like to take this craft out again, or the old *Cross* yonder, — take her around the Horn!"

Winthrop and Mrs. Townley had come on deck, but they were lingering, still out of earshot.

"I could do that," Martin went on. "I can command a ship. Perhaps I ought to be content with that. But I'd like to know a few of the things that Winthrop there knows so well. We make fun of a landlubber at sea, but he's nothing to a sealubber ashore."

"When did you begin to get such ideas as that?" she demanded. "You know they aren't true."

Winthrop and Mrs. Townley were coming

aft now. Martin turned away from them and toward Celia with a little gesture of impatience.

"Oh, you're very kind to me —"

"Kind," she interrupted indignantly. "I'm not kind to anybody."

"I don't believe," said Mrs. Townley, "that you've seen as much of her as we did, though you did have Captain Carver to show you about."

As to why Celia cried that night she could not explain to herself, let alone to her mother. Only things did go perversely sometimes and everybody was stupid.

The twenty-second of July, the day of the false news of Bull Run and then the true news, the day that Captain Dearborn reported the loss of the *Centaur*, that Winthrop mutinied and old John Carver nearly died in one of his rages, had not quite emptied the Pandora's box of sensations it had brought.

About five o'clock in the afternoon, Mrs. Townley, coming into Celia's room, roused her from an uneasy sleep.

"I'm sorry to wake you, dear," she said. "A real nap would have done you good."

"I don't believe I was asleep," the girl announced wearily.

Her mother sat down beside her on the bed, stroked her dishevelled hair, and kissed her wet

eyelids. "I hope there won't be many such days until we get back home," she said. "This has been too hard for you."

"No harder than for you, Mummy. You're braver than I am."

"Older, Celia, that's all."

Indeed, to one who looked closely, Mrs. Townley showed the marks of that day no less plainly than her daughter. Both were exhausted.

"I've a message for you," the mother went on. "Mrs. Carver asked me if Winthrop might see you. He's waiting in the library."

"I cannot see him, of course. Look at me. My eyes won't be fit to be seen for days."

"I'd go down, dear, if I could."

Her mother was looking at her searchingly, and her gaze brought an anguish of quick alarm into the girl's face. "Oh, has something dreadful happened, — something else? What — why don't you tell me, mother?"

She was already off the bed and with trembling fingers was trying to fasten her dress and rearrange her tumbled hair. Her mother helped her silently.

When it was finished, Celia kissed her forehead, and again the look, wistful, troubled, questioning, arrested her. "You do know," she cried, but Mrs. Townley shook her head, and Celia, after waiting a moment for some other

answer, turned and went slowly down the stairs to the library.

He was standing, as once before she had seen him, in the recessed window, and, curiously, again the first thought which almost had time to reach full consciousness, was of Martin.

He was alert for her coming this time, and turning quickly, thrust out his hands toward her. The gesture, too, made her think of the elder brother.

"Celia," he said.

He had called her that once before, but then with a playful impudence which had so patently invited a rebuke that she had laughed — and not rebuked him.

But to-day there was a note in his voice which was not to be mistaken.

"What is it?" she said. "What has happened?"

"What has happened? You know, don't you?"

"About the battle, yes, and that your father has been very ill."

"Mother told me of that only half an hour ago. Did you know that it was a quarrel with me that brought on the attack?"

She nodded.

"And you know what we quarrelled about?"

She hesitated. "Not exactly," she said.

"Then I want to tell you that — first."

He noted how white and forlorn she looked, so he insisted on making her comfortable in a big chair before he went on. Then he spoke quickly but very moderately.

"I'm what you call — what I call, too — I'm an abolitionist. Father guessed it long ago — though we have never come to words over the question, and he has — despised me for it. To-day, when he said that we had had our lesson, and that yesterday's defeat would be the end, I told him that there would never be an end, never until the slaves were free or we were all dead. And I told him he was a traitor."

There was a long silence. She made no comment whatever but by a look of troubled perplexity in her white face.

"You know why I had to tell you this — first, don't you, Celia? It might make a difference, perhaps a great difference, but there can be no false pretence of any kind between us now."

The question deepened in her face, and she looked at him steadily.

"I enlisted to-day. I have only this hour left, so I must tell you, now. Don't you know what I have to tell? Don't you guess, Celia, — sweetheart?"

With a sharp intaking of the breath, she half rose, than sank back limply in her chair. He

stood before her — he would have knelt but for the look in her face.

"Haven't you known before? Haven't you seen?" he demanded. "I've been trying to show you. I thought you understood."

"There has been a mistake," she said laboriously. "I ought to have seen. I see now. I am very much to blame."

"But all these days — surely they meant something. You must have meant — "

"Oh!" she cried, "I wish I — "

The gust spent itself before she finished the sentence. Then she said very gently: —

"Mother saw. At least, she thought it was the other way — that I was — falling in love with you." There came a faint flush into her cheeks, but she went on, "And Captain Carver seemed to think that, too."

He was badly hurt, and he cried out: —

"So you were just amusing yourself and laughing at all of us," he said.

"You have a right to say that. I am almost as much to blame as if it were true. But it isn't. Other men have — have been nice to me the way you have. They've said the same kind of things and never — never meant anything at all, and I understood. I thought you were just the same."

She paused there for a moment, and when she

went on it was with an obviously greater effort.

"Perhaps I might have seen that you were — different, if I'd tried to see. But I wanted it to be that way, so I was sure it was. It was so pleasant to be with you, and I liked you better than — than almost any one else."

"Almost?"

The color came flaming into her cheeks now, but she kept looking steadily into his eyes. "Yes — almost," she said.

He looked back into hers searchingly for a moment, then turned away. When he spoke again it was only to say, with a boyish, pitiful attempt to hide his hurts: —

"I must be going on. Will you say good-by for me to your mother?"

"I haven't any right to ask you to forgive me," she said. "Perhaps you will sometime, though I was so much to blame, and — good-by."

PART III

THE BLOCKADE

CHAPTER VIII

To an interested but disinterested spectator, to an Englishman, for instance, with a leaning towards economics, to Mr. Patrick Odell, let us say, cotton seemed to include everything in the situation. Cotton was responsible for the recrudescence of the question of slavery. Cotton had made the South rich, aristocratic, provincial, and, it must be said, lazy, contemptuous of the grubbing mercantile North, yet indolently willing to look North for all the necessaries, luxuries, extravagances, which cotton found it so easy to buy. Cotton was food, drink, fine apparel, implements of peace, sinews of war. Cotton was king.

And so, clearly, if it should be possible to disenchant cotton, to rob it of its alchemy, to prevent its transformation into cannon and sabres, into rations and blankets, to hold it yellowing in the bale along deserted wharves, its own helpless, useless self, — if they could hold the South in such a grip as that would be, they could, in time, wring all resistance out of the stoutest hearts that ever beat. But to do this they must stretch a barrier round three thousand miles of coast, a barrier which every commercial instinct,

the world over, would be trying to break. Wave and tempest and the exhaustion of ceaseless watching would make it easy to break.

It was perfectly easy to demonstrate that such a feat was impossible. Whenever the wind blew high from the northeast, for instance, the ships composing that barrier must steam far out to sea. Who could imagine that any craft however stanch, however stanch the hearts that manned her, could ride out a North Atlantic gale along that battered coast, at anchor! Well, impossible or not, it was evident that the North meant to try it. The Friday after the fall of Sumter, the day the Sixth Massachusetts marched through Baltimore, the President proclaimed the blockade.

It was not wonderful that Europe, England, Mr. Patrick Odell, looked suspiciously at the proclamation. Since the Napoleonic wars, that sort of licensed piracy known as the paper blockade had been discountenanced. In 1861, according to the code of nations a blockade to be binding must be effective. Before you could forbid a neutral to hold commerce with a hostile port, before you had a right to arrest and search a neutral on the high seas and carry him off as prize if circumstances seemed to warrant it, you must have, constantly, men-of-war enough about the mouth of the blockaded port to keep the

neutral out, or at least to make his getting in "evidently dangerous."

And the fleet? On the day Abraham Lincoln was inaugurated, the second-class screw sloop *Pawnee* lay in the Potomac, and the third-class steamers *Mohawk* and *Crusader* were at New York. That was all. There was not another steam vessel of the United States navy in commission and in a home port!

But, by the last of April, 1861, the greater part, seven-eighths probably, of the cotton crop of the fall of 1860 was already out of the country and the paltry remainder gave little incentive for trying to break the tenuous line of cruisers which had been flung about the seceded states. There were a few months during that summer when the South could laugh and England observe with amazement that the bragging Yankees were really the dupes of their own tall talk, that they veritably believed that this preposterous blockade of theirs was going to be an actuality. Well, they might enjoy their delusion a little longer. Cotton was not yet ready. When it was, it would take its way through its accustomed channels, and the paper blockade would cease to be even in appearance.

During these summer months was worked a transformation. Few saw it, to be sure, for Big Bethel, Bull Run, Ball's Bluff, the blunders, the

disappointments, all loomed so large that the really significant march of events was hard to trace. But the march went on. Slowly the forces were gathered up, slowly the grip tightened, the grip which was never to slacken till it had made an end.

England watched, neutral but very alert; the South watched, defiant, contemptuous; they saw nothing. But when the first of the crop of 1861 was ripe and picked and ginned, the long line of cruisers was no longer imaginary. It held.

Not perfectly, of course. The South ceased to laugh, and began protesting. "This thing has passed a joke. There is no blockade. Don't be abused by the lies they tell up North. The cotton is waiting for you on every wharf. Come and get it."

Still the cotton lay on the wharves. It was past a joke. From Manchester, Leeds, Birmingham, Liverpool, came the cry for cotton. The mills must have it. The mills began to close. Men were lounging in the streets, women grew gaunt, and children wailed with hunger.

Men were still protesting that the blockade was an outrage, that it was a mere pretence, that there was no blockade. But there was in plain sight of everybody a gauge, accurate, undisturbed by any heat of passion, — a dial face with two hands, one indicating the price of cotton in Liverpool, the other the price in

Charleston, South Carolina. Every week, every day, saw these two hands drawing farther apart. The angle between them measured the efficiency of the blockade.

It is the law of the wind, the lightning, the rain, that nature abhors an inequality, and it is no less a law of economics. The wider that angle grew between those two needles on the dial, the greater became the pressure which tried to force them together. And as the angle widened and the pressure increased, it began a metamorphosis in men and things. It made speculators, heroes, bankrupts, traitors, fanatics, millionnaires, just as men happened to stand, just according to the circumstances in which it found them. Rich men, poor men, beggar men, began changing hands, changing places in a mad reel, fantastic, yet all according to an unalterable law.

All our friends had their places in the dance, old John Carver and his wife, Martin, Mrs. Townley, Celia, Mr. Patrick Odell; there was no escaping it.

The first sign had been Mr. Odell's arrival in New York. He was generally anywhere from a minute to a month ahead of the rest of the world in understanding a situation and spying out his own path amid the maze. His letter to John Carver showed that he had begun to take

a reckoning. Before reaching New York he had his course all charted; he knew every current, every bit of shoal water. He was in New York less than a month. When he left Martin accompanied him back to Liverpool, to London, and a little later to the Clyde, where Odell had once seen the steamer, the long, low, snake of a craft which had so greatly interested him.

Three months later a new deal of the cards brought them all together again in a place which none but Martin and old John Carver had seen or more than barely heard of before, the city of Nassau, capital of the British colony, the Bahamas. It was a sleepy little place, with a lazy trade in sponges, and a regretful memory of the good old days before the devious waters of the West Indian Archipelago had been lighted and charted, and there had been a thriving trade in wrecking. There was another, a better, time just ahead, and the little city was soon to be awakened by a veritable shower of gold heaped in its lap by the same capricious, methodical force which was starving the luckless spinners of Leeds and Manchester.

It is an article in the International Code that breach of blockade begins with the act of sailing for a blockaded port. In any corner of the world's high seas, a Federal cruiser, encountering a neutral merchantman, had a right to arrest

her, and, if anything about her papers or her cargo indicated that she was bound to or from a blockaded port, to clap a prize crew aboard her and send her to New York to be judged. If the Admiralty Court then agreed in their opinion, she was sold as prize, and captain and crew went their way, richer in pocket and rejoicing at heart, to catch another. One could be caught with exactly as much legality off Fastnet Light as off Frying Pan Shoals.

But if the merchantman was bound for a neutral port, if her cargo was really consigned to merchants in that port who had a right to get it, then the case was altered, and though the captain of the cruiser might be morally certain that eventually her "heavy hardware" or her blankets were destined for the Confederacy, still he had no power to touch them.

A neutral port, therefore, not too far from the blockaded coast became an essential in the great game. There were three such, Havana, Bermuda, and Nassau, of which the last named, lying just across the Gulf Stream from the Florida coast, was the nearest and the best. Using this port as a base, one could crowd all the risk of the voyage from England into the last five hundred miles of it. For five-sixths of the way the merchandise and the cotton could be carried openly, safely, cheaply.

So the lazy, basking little city of Nassau was to become one of the important commercial centres of the world. Her hot, white streets would soon be crowded with eager speculators, her dark, damp little shops overflowing with buyers flinging sovereigns about like halfpence, her harbor thronged with masts and funnels. The secret of the Midas touch was to be learned again. One would only have to stretch out a hand and what lay underneath would turn to gold.

In the harbor of this city, and a very good harbor it was in those days, tugging lightly at her cables as the tide ran lazily by, lay a side-wheel steamer, a low, narrow, rakish-looking vessel, the identical craft which had inspired so great an enthusiasm in Mr. Odell when he saw her slipping down the Clyde. What her name had been in those days is of no importance. It is just as well, perhaps, not to mention it. On her arrival in Nassau, Mr. Odell had promptly suggested rechristening her the *Celia*, but as that young lady declined the honor, and in a manner, by the way, which seemed to him unnecessarily peremptory, they had hit upon the *Caroline* as specially appropriate to the two ports where she expected to trade. She sat even lower in the water than on that first occasion, for now she was loaded with all they dared put into her. Deep in her hold, invoiced as hardware, was the

very shipment of arms which the *Southern Cross* had tried to carry into Wilmington.

Mr. Odell's enthusiasm for her had grown greater with every day of the voyage down, and now that he had old John Carver to share it with him, it effervesced constantly. Mr. Carver's went even to greater lengths than his own They never tired of rowing around her in a little boat, admiring her long, thin entrance, her feathering paddles, the graceful turn of her counter. Then they would clamber aboard, and admire the improved oscillating cylinders to her engines and the heaps of clean Pennsylvania anthracite in her bunkers.

There was nothing systematic or necessary about these daily visits. The trim, fast little craft was simply a new toy, and they could not keep away from it. They recognized this themselves, and often acknowledged that the old man of the party, the serious-minded, responsible head of the enterprise, was Martin.

Indeed, he seemed to them to take the responsibility too hard. He not only faced it, he seemed unwilling to look, even for a moment, at anything else. He was now in the hold, now in the chart room, and when he went ashore it was only to go straight to the agency in Bay Street, to pick up whatever late intelligence might have come in as to the conditions of the blockade, the

lights, and batteries at Cape Fear or elsewhere. He worked as hard as a man could, but it was all up hill with him. He seemed to have lost his spring.

"And he ought to be as gay as a lark, too," said the old man, talking it over, as he had done before with Mr. Odell. "He has got a bold man's job to do, and a dashing craft to do it in."

They were standing on the high bridge amidships, and Mr. Carver looked forward and then aft as he spoke. "She's as pretty a thing in her way as the old *Cross* was in hers," he went on. "I don't know what to make of the boy. He's as cold-blooded as a fish."

"It's just as well," the other answered, "that what blood goes to his head, at least, shouldn't be too hot. And from what I know of men, it's just when a chap gets into his frame of mind that nothing can stop him."

Upon the hill in a secluded corner, shaded by the salient of the deserted Fort Fincastle, sat Mrs. Townley and Celia. The lazy little city with its pink and orange walls, its faded green jalousies, its blazing white streets, was sleeping soundly in the warm November sun. Only the lightest of airs was stirring, but the remnant of some storm a thousand miles away was spending itself in long, foam-crested ridges, thundering

over the sands on the farther side of the little strip of an island which forms a breakwater and makes the harbor of Nassau. Out beyond stretched the sea, bluer, literally bluer, than sapphires and more luminous. In the shallow harbor it was several shades lighter, but perhaps more intensely blue. And up in the blue sky, to give the finishing touch to the tropically colored picture, was a great cumulous cloud, olive-green and saffron, which threatened before sunset to spill a shower upon the little city.

Mrs. Townley was reading a letter, obviously not for the first time, for her gaze frequently wandered, now out to the harbor where the prospective blockade-runner lay at anchor, now to the sea or to the cloud, but most often to her daughter's face. The girl was sitting quietly, but it was with an evident effort, for the few movements she made were restless and quite without purpose.

"I don't like it, after all," she said fretfully. "It's so bright and staring."

"Did I tell you that Mr. Odell thinks we shall get off to-morrow, so this is likely to be our last afternoon up here? Your memory will tell you another story of it when we're gone away."

"I shall always hate it, whether it's pretty or not, and I shall never remember one of these days if I can help it."

Her mother turned back to her letter. "Isn't it good," she said, after a little silence, "to hear from them, if it's only as indirectly as this? And Mrs. Sherwin will probably have later news of them by the time we get home, even if there isn't a letter waiting for us. Three days now — three days — and we'll be home again."

"It won't be much like home, with father and Harper away, and no house to go to. And we'll be curiosities, too. Every one we know will insist upon all the details of our adventures. We'll have to tell our story a dozen times a day. If they'd only leave us alone!"

That was about what Celia's mood had been ever since they had come to Nassau; broken by occasional fits of penitence and remorse it is true, but in the main just about that. The next silence was a little longer, but again it was the mother who broke it.

"Have you noticed the strange blue-gray coat of paint they're putting on the ship? It's to make her invisible, Mr. Carver says. Really, you can't see her nearly so plainly as you could yesterday. Do you see how that little sponging sloop stands out, and it's farther away than she is. It was Martin's idea, I believe."

"No doubt," commented Celia.

"I find myself thinking of it as a certainty," Mrs. Townley went on, "just as though there

were no blockading fleet in the way. I forget that there is any chance or danger about it. And I suppose it is safe enough, or they wouldn't let us take the risk."

"Safe! Do you suppose Martin Carver would as much as look at it if it weren't perfectly safe?"

Mrs. Townley looked at her, not in surprise, for she had heard such outbreaks before, but with both trouble and interrogation in her face. Her daughter did not answer the look, but tried to give a playful note to her voice as she went on.

"But it wouldn't be so bad if they did take us, Mummy. A prison wouldn't be such a bad place. We'd be by ourselves, anyhow."

But her voice only sounded drier and harder for its attempted lightness. Her mother, with a little sigh, turned her face away, but not until Celia had seen her eyes filled with tears. And at that it was as if a taut-drawn cord had snapped. She buried her face in her mother's lap.

"Oh, Mummy, Mummy, I've been so wicked to you. Do you love me at all, or do you go on being kind to me just because you're kind?"

Her mother bent over her, stroking her head and speaking her name softly, as one would speak to a little child. Presently the girl ceased sobbing, and lay quite still in her mother's lap. After a little, she spoke again, very quietly.

"I've been so miserable and unhappy. You know why. At least you know a little why. But I'm going to tell you all about it. I've been trying to tell you a long, long while."

She was silent, though, for a time, and before speaking again she sat erect and dried her eyes. She had her voice well in control when she began, and if she spoke incoherently, it was by reason of her effort to reveal everything, to show to this one person in the world the whole of her troubled heart.

"It wasn't so much the thing itself as it was the pettiness and sordidness and meanness of it all that — that was worst. I wouldn't have believed that if I hadn't just seen it grow every day. I knew I'd been mistaken twice about him, and when I began to be afraid of what might happen, I resolved that I wouldn't care what the appearances might be against him. I thought I'd know what he really was, no matter what might seem to contradict it. And then Mr. Odell came over, and they began to have their long talks, and he grew so interested in the idea. Oh, he really *liked* it! If I hadn't seen that part of it, I'd have thought that there must be some reason, some secret that he couldn't tell me, that made him do it. I suppose there might be some reason, perhaps, that would justify a man in turning traitor to his country."

"'Oh, Mummy, Mummy.'"

"Oh —" began Mrs. Townley, tentatively.

"Isn't that what he's done, Mummy?" the girl demanded imperatively. "Suppose that Harper —"

"It seems so to us, certainly," said the mother, but still cautiously, and with some hesitation. Celia went on: —

"If he had just come to me some day and told me he was going to take command of a blockade-runner, I shouldn't have — oh, I'd have cared, of course, but it would have been different. Even if he hadn't explained, even if he hadn't said there was anything to explain, I'd have been sure there was, and that it justified him."

She made another long pause there. Her thoughts seemed to have strayed away and to be finding some comfort in the case she had just supposed. "But it wasn't that way at all," she said, when she had come back at last to the cheerless reality. "He took to it all so horribly naturally. He gradually got interested in the idea, and when they asked him to do it, he did it, just of course. He didn't see any harm in being a traitor. He wasn't ashamed of it; he didn't mind it being spoken of. He even made conversation about it himself, and when he saw that I despised him — he *did* see that, he didn't know the reason. He doesn't know now. He thinks it's something about Winthrop. Oh,

why couldn't he have been a little more like Winthrop?"

Her voice was vibrant with scorn, and there was something besides scorn in it, too. She sat looking out to sea awhile and then turned back to her mother.

"That's all, Mummy," she said. "Let's go back to the hotel. I'm tired."

"But *is* that all, Celia? Isn't there something else for you to tell me?"

She had half risen, but now she sank back again in her seat. The flush which spread from cheeks to forehead showed she had understood the question.

"Yes, that's all; that's truly all. He has never — There is no more to tell. I think there might have been, if I — It makes it all the worse. Oh, I know it's better in some ways that it's as it is! But I haven't any right to care so much. I ought to be glad. I ought to be glad for the South. I ought to be glad that there are Yankees who'll do such a thing." Her voice broke there, but she recovered it immediately. "But I can't be glad, and I haven't any right to hate and despise the thing he's done any more than what old Mr. Carver has done, or plenty of other people. That's almost the hardest — yes, I think that's the worst of all. Kiss me, Mummy."

CHAPTER IX

The plans for the expedition were worked out with a thoroughness in detail which seemed to leave little room for mischance. They were to start about dusk on the afternoon decided upon. Three days' easy running, for the *Caroline*, would bring them to Cape Fear shortly after dark. The moon would not rise that night until nearly midnight, so, the days being then almost at their shortest, they would have six good hours of darkness in which to dodge through the fleet and into the river. They had as good a pilot as could be got, — Martin had seen to that, — the man who had, that very week, brought the *Theodora* out of the same port that they were bound for, who knew as much of the special conditions and perils there as it was possible to know of anything that kept changing so constantly.

Mrs. Townley had not been alone in her unthinking confidence that all would go according to plans. All the party — leaving Martin out of account, for no one could tell what he thought — all were alike in regarding success as a foregone conclusion, the chickens as already hatched, the ship as good as safe in port. That feeling

was natural enough. Already other craft, not unlike their own, were beginning to appear in these waters, some triumphant in achievement, the rest almost equally triumphant in the anticipation of it. Two or three runners had reported voyages as uneventful as any in time of peace, and what adventures the others had had seemed mild enough in the telling. Those that had come to grief, those that had been driven aground and burned amid a blaze of artillery and Coston lights, those that had been taken alive and now, rechristened and under another flag, were running with the hounds, not with the hare, — those, of course, had never come back to tell the tale and abate the spirits of the survivors. But even their misfortunes had almost always had something rather obvious to account for them, — a glaring error of judgment on the part of master, so glaring that no one else could ever have thought of committing it, or a bit of ill-luck so perverse that it could hardly happen again. To any master or pilot who could keep his wits about him, there ought to be no risk at all.

That was the way all the party felt about it until the very hour of departure, until the very moment when Mr. and Mrs. Carver crossed the gang-plank shoreward and the improved oscillating cylinders began slowly to move the noiseless feathering paddles. Mrs. Townley and

Celia, and Mr. Odell, — for he too, was going through to establish the business at the Wilmington end, — all gathered at the rail for one of those long-range conversations, which, in spite of previous warnings of experience, people in such circumstances will always attempt.

At that moment to all of them the notion occurred that there was a whole fleet of cruisers between them and Wilmington, any one of which could send the defenceless *Caroline* to bottom with a single shell, whose first and only business just now was to prevent enterprises like this from succeeding. All but Mr. Odell swallowed this idea as well as they could in silence, but he tried to make a joke of it.

"If you don't hear of us for a month," he cried to Mr. Carver ashore, "come up to New York and bail us out of Fort Hamilton."

"Where?" called Mr. Carver.

"Hamilton — Fort Hamilton!" shouted Odell.

There being another Hamilton at Bermuda, Nassau's one great rival in the blockade-running trade, Mr. Carver naturally misunderstood, and began shouting excited questions as to what he meant by talking about Hamilton, while Mr. Odell, his voice breaking under the unnatural strain he had put upon it, tried vainly to correct him, until the increasing distance between them finally reduced both to pantomime.

Still full of his new, disquieting thoughts about shells and cruisers, Mr. Odell, after they were out of the harbor, sought out the pilot, thinking to get comfort from him. After some semi-nautical inquiries as to the state of the glass and the prospects for fine weather, he came to the subject near to his heart.

"I suppose," he said, as nonchalantly as possible, "that under favorable conditions such as we have, there's practically no danger at all."

Now, the pilot was a sailor to begin with, and he was also an artist, altogether too good an artist to belittle his own profession. He took a very large chew of tobacco and a very long look at Mr. Odell. Then he spat reflectively over the side. "Well, now," said he, slowly, "where did you get any such idea as that?"

Then, after an inquiry as to whether Mr. Odell had sailed into that port before, he began at the beginning. He agreed with Mr. Odell in expressing small regard for the cruisers. "But," said he, "leave that out entirely. Say that they cut no figure at all in the situation, and what's the job we've got laid out for us?"

Well, he made a long story of it, and whatever its interest may have been intrinsically, it certainly fascinated Mr. Odell. In the main, all that he said was true. He dwelt at length upon the terrors of Frying-pan Shoals, without, it

must be owned, giving them more than was really their due. He told direful stories of "The Lump," and if they had not all happened at that time, they all came true before the long blockade was over, and surely prophetic license is not too much to allow a pilot.

"And," he concluded, "when it comes to finding a harbor entrance that shifts at every storm or lump of sea, on as nasty a night as the master can pick out, with never a buoy or beacon, no light but what's in your own binnacle to go by, and nothing but a scud of flying cloud to give you the range, *I* ain't the man to call it an easy job. And I ain't said nothing about the cruisers."

At that, seeing that he had produced the effect he sought, the pilot lapsed into silence, and no further inquiries could draw from him more than the most unsatisfactory of monosyllables.

Mr. Odell then left him hurriedly, and went in search of Martin. He was surprised and a little inclined to be indignant at not finding him at the post of danger on the bridge, and his indignation very nearly betrayed itself openly, when, after looking high and low over the ship, he went to the least likely place of all, and there found him in his own cabin, contentedly smoking his pipe, and reading a well-thumbed copy of Maury's "Physical Geography of the Sea."

"I have just been having some conversation with our pilot," he began. "It seemed to me that you should know of it at once; so, as I didn't find you on the bridge, I ventured to come here."

Whatever Martin may have guessed, whether or not there came a faint smile behind his face, he replied very gravely, and with great concern: —

"You did quite right, of course. Thank you. Shall I call the pilot, or will you tell me what he said?"

"I think I can give you the gist of it," said Mr. Odell, still a little stiffly.

The pilot's story lost nothing in the telling. It was quite apparent that they were going to almost certain destruction, that nothing short of a miracle, whether wrought by Providence or by the pilot, could save them. In conclusion, Mr. Odell suggested, as emphatically as was consistent with a mere suggestion, that they give up all idea of getting into Wilmington and make instead for Charleston, Savannah, or some other port where there was some hope of success.

Martin said nothing until he had finished, and not immediately then. It is a curious fact that, while he was putting aside his Maury and deliberating upon his answer, Mr. Odell began to feel exactly like a schoolboy who has taken a question to his master and suddenly becomes

aware that he has asked something exceptionally silly; or like the recruit who, at the suggestion of his older comrades, has just asked the commissary sergeant for his "sabre-ammunition."

"The other fellows get in," said Martin. "The *Theodora* has gone into Wilmington twice, and so has the *Kate*, since we have been at Nassau. This same pilot has taken them in himself."

"The conditions may have changed — "

"A little," said Martin, "but for the better. They've a better system of giving you the ranges after you show your lights than they had a month ago."

A very fine red was now burning in Mr. Odell's cheeks. "I wish, Captain, that you'd dispense with that fellow's services as soon as we get into Wilmington if we do get in, and never employ them again. He's been insolent to me! He's lied to me!"

"Oh, I guess he hasn't lied to you — or not much," said Martin. "You see, Mr. Odell, he naturally wants you to think when you get in that you owe it all to his supernatural skill, that with anybody else in his place you'd certainly have been lost; so he told you all the difficulties without saying anything about the special ways he has of meeting them. He's been getting special knowledge for this sort of thing ever since

he was a boy. He knows how to tell where he is and to find a harbor entrance, and he's no more likely to run on The Lump than you are to stumble over a chair in your own drawing-room. There are tricks in all trades, and he wants his to be as impressive as possible. That's not saying, though, that the job he has isn't a difficult one, or that he isn't really entitled to a lot of credit every time he does it successfully."

However it may be in others, there were a whole catalogue of tricks in the trade of blockade-running. By 1863 they had all been discovered, and were practised by everybody, but at the beginning one had to find them out for himself. Martin was about to learn one now, and in the school whose lessons one is most unlikely to forget.

He had laid his course, on leaving Nassau, straight for Hole-in-the-Wall, as any good navigator in his place would have done, — any one except an old blockade-runner, had there been such a person in those days.

The southern extremity of Great Abaco Island, which lies about fifty miles north by east from Nassau, presents itself wedge-wise between the main Bahamas Channel and the Northwest Providence Channel. One naturally sailed as close to it as possible, both because the Great Abaco light gave one his whereabouts precisely,

and because on the other side of the channel lay the dangerous reefs of Eleuthera.

Consequently this principal corner upon so important a thoroughfare soon became a favorite point of vantage for Federal cruisers, and from very early in the war one of them might almost always be found, loafing about, as it were, with its hands in its pockets, but quite ready to rush out and snap up any luckless runners which might come by that way. So the runners soon learned to give that headland a wide berth, and to take their chances among the reefs instead. It was a trick of the trade, merely, but an important one to know.

Now, as we have said, the *Caroline* was steaming straight along for Hole-in-the-Wall, and was, furthermore, making her steam with a medium quality of Welsh coal, which is by no means smokeless, her anthracite being husbanded for time of danger. This economy was practised, not because anthracite was costly — for in blockade-running one did not count the cost — but because it was frequently impossible to get it at any price, and a runner without any of it, unable to turn her wheels without making smoke, was in a perilous case, indeed. So the *Caroline*, steaming easily and smoking in the same degree, drew near Abaco, having for some time back made out the light very clearly.

The moon had risen a little before, and was already lighting up the sea with subtropical brilliancy. The passengers were gathered aft, admiring it and enjoying the lovely calm of the evening, for the air, except as the steamer cleft a way through it, was quite still.

"It's pleasant to have some light to go by," observed Mr. Odell, rubbing his hands. "And it seems safer, too, than to be rushing along among all these little islands in the dark."

Mrs. Townley agreed with him. "Though I suppose it makes very little difference, really," she said. "Sailors seem to have a sixth sense for knowing where they are in the night."

The moon did make a difference, however, and a large one. As the light grew brighter, Martin, from the bridge, threw more than one anxious glance at the smoking funnel. It was beginning to occur to him that perhaps it would be better to go somewhat less conspicuously past this important "four corners" in the public highway. He sent down an order to the engineers.

"Have the stokers fire more carefully. We're making more smoke than is necessary."

Just as he had given the order, another puff, blacker than ever, belched out of the funnels, and another order went at the heels of the first.

"Fire with anthracite."

There is the sixth sense, if you please, Mrs. Townley; an instinct that gives warning of a danger not yet perceptible, that rings so loud an alarm, that practical considerations, so called, at once give place to it.

Martin was scanning the sea with his glass. There seemed to be nothing certainly, but still —

He lowered the glass, and stood irresolutely a moment; then in three strides he was at the signal lever. There was the muffled sound of a bell, and then the engines stopped.

There is always at sea a sharp sensation of dread when, without warning, a ship's great heart suddenly ceases to beat; and on this voyage, with the thought of danger not far below the surface in every one's mind, the effect was intensified. There was a moment when not a soul in the ship drew breath. The little group of passengers aft, the blackened men in the stoke-hole, the port watch dozing in the forecastle, the cook in his galley and the steward near the cabin door, suddenly stiffened in whatever attitudes of rest or motion this alarm had surprised them. Even the old engineer who had pulled the lever pressed his lips tighter together, as he stood waiting at his post for what should come next.

It might be a splintering crash into another ship, or into a half-hidden coral reef; it might

be the scrape of a long-boat alongside and the tramp of feet on deck as a prize crew from some cruiser took possession of her; or it might be nothing at all. But, brave man as he was, his face set and he drew his breath softly as he waited.

A silence, complete but for the soft rustle as she sliced her way through the water, fell upon the ship. The second officer, whose watch it was and who was also on the bridge, was staring at Martin in undisguised amazement; for the captain was standing, his hand still resting on the signal lever, his eyes lowered to the deck, absently, as a man overtaken by a day-dream. This was their captain!

Martin raised his eyes and read what was plain enough to read in his lieutenant's face.

"Listen!" he said.

And then the other heard it. Far off over the water, coming from nowhere, from everywhere, was another pulse, another heart-throbbing, racking itself in the utmost agony of haste.

"It's no use trying to get her bearing by ear on a night like this," said Martin, coolly. "Take your glass, Mr. White, and see if you can make her out. We can't run until we know which way to go."

He himself was scanning the sea as he said it. Nothing, — and after thirty seconds still

nothing, — nothing but a tiny shred of white, a particle of silver wire glinting on the sea. He lowered the glass and jerked the lever back again, full speed ahead. "Three points abaft the beam, Mr. White," he said.

The mate had his glass on it in an instant. The gleaming shred needed no explanation. It was the curl and break of a wave under the stem of the cruiser as she gathered way.

Their relative positions were rather favorable to the runner, for the cruiser had to go round the end of the shoal off Hole-in-the-Wall, whereas the *Caroline* was clear of it. Martin sent for the first engineer. "I want to drop him before sunrise," he said, pointing out the cruiser. "Get all the speed out of this craft you can. Make it your first consideration."

The man said he would do his best, and was going away just as Mr. Odell came up.

"You're going to get us safe away from that rascal, aren't you, Mr. Engineer?" he asked.

"The captain can tell you better than I about that, sir."

"Well, what do you say, Captain?"

"If he hadn't just referred to me, I'd have referred you to Mr. Morgan. The best I can say is that if we have the heels of her we shall get off, but if she has the heels of us, she's pretty sure to catch us."

"No doubt," said Mr. Odell, dryly, flushing a little.

"You see," Martin went on, "there won't be any more darkness till to-morrow evening, so we have practically no chance of giving her the slip in any way but by running straight away from her. And unless we're faster we can't do it. That's the question we are going to try now. I should think that in an hour we should be able to tell you something more about it. As Mr. Morgan says, the best we can do is all we can do."

Mr. Odell never forgot as long as he lived what doing their best meant aboard the *Caroline.* They stripped her upper works of everything movable, or even removable, that could hinder the rush of the keen night air across her bare decks. They fed coal into her roaring furnaces until her funnels scorched the deck planks, until the decks were so hot they blistered the feet. The stokers, who changed shifts every twenty minutes, would come staggering out on deck and drop exhausted till it was time to go down into hell again. And, driven by so fierce a blast, the graceful, slender little *Caroline,* whose usual motion was so smooth and effortless, trembled, shook, jarred from stem to stern, and seemed fairly to cry out as she flew along. It was impossible to tell whether it was all to

be in vain or not. Fast as they flew, they could always see, far off astern, the white wreath under the stem of their pursuer. The cruiser was doing her best, too, and one "best" seemed quite as good as another.

There was no thought of sleep that night — no thought of leaving the deck, for either the heat or the excitement was reason enough to make staying below intolerable. The steward brought out two canvas chairs for Mrs. Townley and Celia, while Mr. Odell and two other men who were going through as passengers had their mattresses brought up from their state-rooms. Every ten minutes some one would go aft to the taffrail for another look through the glass, and on his return the rest would all rouse themselves and ask the news, only to get, with slight variations, the old report — No change.

About three in the morning, Martin came down from the bridge, and joined Mr. Odell, who happened to be standing by the rail. "I'd like a little talk with you," he said. "I want some information."

"We are doing the best we can," he went on, after waiting till one of the other passengers, who had strolled up, had, somewhat more jauntily, strolled away again. "We're doing our best, but our best isn't enough. We haven't gained three lengths on that chap the last

three hours. I don't believe we've lost much more than that, but, as I say, that isn't good enough."

"He's saying exactly the same thing himself, I dare say."

"He may be saying it to his men, but I guess he's saying to himself that if he can keep us hull up till sunrise he's got us. And I'm inclined to agree with him. Any change that comes is likely to help him. If he can get a breeze of the right sort or a bit of lumpy sea or another cruiser, and all three are likely enough, he'll have us. So I think it's necessary to do better. I rather think we shall have to lighten ship."

"To — what?"

"To pitch part of our cargo overboard."

"I shouldn't want to do that unless it was absolutely necessary."

"I shan't decide for half an hour. I'd like you to tell me what you think it best to sacrifice. It's just a question, I suppose, of how much everything's worth a pound."

Mr. Odell hesitated. "Yes — or — well, not exactly. There is another consideration, and that is, what would we like least to have them find on board if they took us." Then, half apologetically, he went on, "I suppose there might be a difference in the eyes of the law,

perhaps, between taking arms or ammunition through the blockade and taking other things."

Martin was frowning thoughtfully. "I suppose there would," he said abruptly, at last.

"Yes," Mr. Odell went on, "I should say if you decide to lighten the cargo you'd much better send all heavy hardware overboard. And I should say, too, I think, that we'd better not make it part of our cargo a second time. And we'll put up with one half-loaf this trip and try to make up for it by and by."

He was rather less philosophical about it when he actually began to see the heavy cases tumbling off astern, and he looked aft at the speck of a cruiser with no friendly eye. "If we had one big gun instead of all these muskets, I'd be tempted to lie up a bit and drop a shell into her."

"I didn't suppose you had the makings of a pirate about you," said Martin. "That's what it would be, you know, and no mistake about it, if we fired into her. Piracy! And the trap-door and the halter for all of us!"

It was a long job getting the heavy cases overboard, but by the time it was completed they had already gained perceptibly on their pursuers. By the time the dawn had brightened into day she was all but lost again, the top of her funnels and her two raking masts alone being visible.

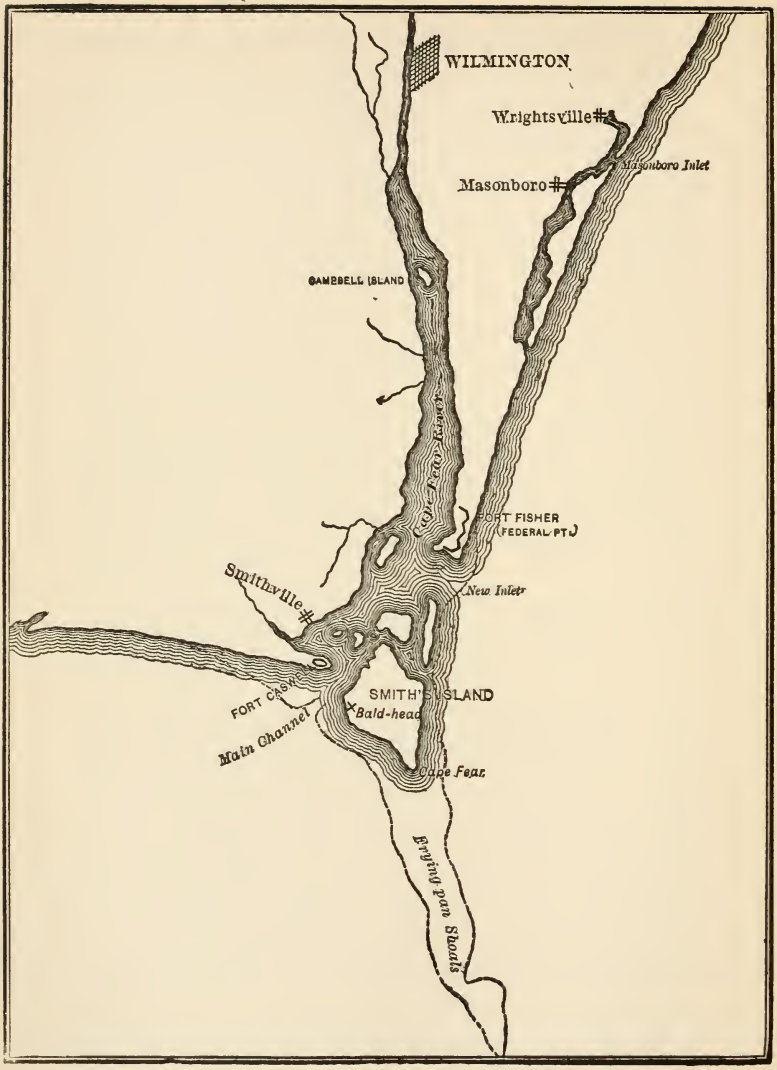
They had not yet done with her, though, for

just at that time a light-to-fresh westerly breeze sprang up, and a little later, when Martin had gone down into the cabin for a cup of coffee, the mate came to him in great excitement, reporting the cruiser as being hull up again and rapidly overhauling them under sail. "And this darned little teapot hasn't a rag of canvas to bless herself with!"

"Keep her as she bears," said Martin, quite easily, and he finished his coffee before he went on deck. The cruiser was plainly in sight when he mounted the bridge, but he hardly cast a glance at her. He had just looked at his barometer. Now he took a casual survey of the sky. Then: —

"Port your helm," he called down to the quartermaster in the wheel-house, "and steer a course due east."

It was so simple a trick that the mate was never afterward able to persuade himself that it was not he who had thought of it. Both vessels were of course steaming faster than this light breeze was blowing. With it almost abeam the cruiser could still use it to a great advantage, but with it directly abaft it was reduced to a minus quantity. It took her sails aback, deadened her way, and a very few minutes after she had come around on the new course the watchers on the *Caroline* saw her, again under bare poles,


WILMINGTON
Wrightsville
Masonboro
Masonboro Inlet
CAMBELL ISLAND
Lower Cape Fear River
FORT FISHER
(FEDERAL PT.)
New Inlet
Smithville
FORT CASWELL
SMITH'S ISLAND
Bald-head
Main Channel
Cape Fear
Frying pan Shoals

dropping off astern. They did not see her again, and after making a wide detour, for caution's sake, the *Caroline* again headed for Cape Fear.

It will be better, perhaps, to try to get a juster idea than the pilot succeeded in giving Mr. Odell of the difficulties which attended running the blockade into Wilmington. The city lies on the Cape Fear River, about thirty miles from its mouth, but the river flows south, so nearly parallel to the coast that the distance in a direct line from the city to the sea is only six or seven miles. The river had in those days — it has been changed since — two channels to the sea. The main channel lay straight on southward; the other, turning to the left, the east, led out past Federal Point, through New Inlet. On this point Fort Fisher, famous in the annals of the war, had already assumed formidable proportions. The other entrance, or main channel, was commanded by Fort Caswell.

Between these two channels lay Smith Island, projecting southward into the point whose best description is in its name, Cape Fear; and still southward from the cape, extending fifteen miles out to sea, lie Frying-pan Shoals. The name is a little misleading. Smith's Island is really the frying-pan, and the shoals the handle.

Going around this handle made a journey,

from one channel entrance to the other, of nearly forty miles; so, from the blockader's point of view, the two were as entirely distinct as if they belonged to different ports. By day and with a smooth sea, a light-draft steamer could contrive to creep across the shoals at various points, but as the sea was seldom smooth and the result of the attempt uncertain enough at the best, it was not often done.

To the outward-bound runner this choice of two channels was a very distinct advantage. He could slip down the river, anchor at Smithville, and wait a favorable chance at one door or the other to get out. But the runner bound for Wilmington had to decide which entrance to make for when he was still well out at sea, and then to take his chance with conditions as he found them.

Very late indeed in her fourth night out of Nassau, the *Caroline* came limping cautiously along the west side of Frying-pan Shoals, bound for the main channel; she had already had a fair share of experiences, even for a blockade runner, for, after turning out of her course to shake off the cruiser, she had encountered a storm which tossed her about, lightened as she was of the main part of her cargo, like a shuttlecock, had damaged her starboard paddle, and had threatened to roll her funnels right out of her. The

passengers had been so acutely miserable that their relief on getting into smooth water again made getting past the cruisers a minor consideration altogether.

Martin and the pilot were both looking rather grave. To begin with they did not know exactly where they were, for the sky had been heavily overcast since morning, and now that the clouds were to be of capital assistance to them in veiling the moon, which was by now high up in the sky, they threatened to break up and reveal the *Caroline*, right amid the fleet. But both men agreed that it was better to run this chance than to put to sea again. For, with the steamer in her present condition, another long chase would almost certainly have a different result.

Somewhere before them in the velvet-black night towered Bald-head with its abandoned lighthouse. Somewhere was a rank of sleepless cruisers, silent, alert. Somewhere was a channel, if they could but find it, and a way to safety.

They had been crawling along for more than an hour, taking soundings constantly, for that was the only way of determining their whereabouts, when the pilot, who stood by Martin on the bridge, with a sigh of relief pointed forward. Far off there glowed, through the darkness, a dim point of light, visible at all only to practised eyes.

"What is it? Not the light-ship?" queried Martin.

"No, she won't show her light till we ask for it. It's a little special arrangement the Yankees have for helping us through. The middle ship in the line always shows a light. It gives the harbor entrance as good as old Bald-head Light itself could."

"It's always the middle ship that shows the light?" said Martin, incredulously.

The pilot chuckled. "It is 'most too good to be true. And I suppose it's too good to last."

"Too good to have lasted as long as this, I'm afraid," said Martin.

"Well, maybe. But it's all we've got to go by to-night, so we'll just hope for the best. How about it? Are you ready to make a try for it?"

"Just a moment," said Martin. He sent a message to the engine-room. "Tell Mr. Morgan that the fleet is sighted, and ask if he has steam enough to make a dash for it."

"Steam enough," came back the answer.

Then on every muscle, every nerve, every faculty, there came a quiet pulling up of the tension. Martin nodded to the pilot. "All ready!" he said.

Then silently, stealthily, the *Caroline* began creeping up for her spring. The cruiser's light

was slowly rising higher above the water. It was so nearly time, the moment for the dash so near to the razor edge of the present, that waiting for it seemed intolerable.

Martin touched the pilot's elbow, and as he spun round pointed to the east. The clouds were breaking and rolling off, leaving great patches of moonlit sky.

"We'll have the light full on us in three minutes," whispered the pilot, simply. "Well, it's now or not at all; what do you say?"

Martin nodded. "Now, of course," he said.

"I wish I was — What in hell — "

The light had been penetrating farther into the black west every instant, and as the pilot laid his hand on the signal lever, in the very act of pulling it over to full speed, he saw right before him a headland with a white lighthouse on top of it. Bald-head! The cruiser which had shown her light was no longer in the middle of the line, but at the southeast end of it.

He might have made his dash straight through from where he was, and he might have got her across the shoal water in safety. But perhaps he had forgotten for the moment how little the *Caroline* drew now that part of her cargo was at the bottom of the sea, or perhaps his nerve had been shaken by this sudden discovery of the mistake he had made. Whatever the reason,

instead of the "Full speed ahead," which Martin still expected, it was "Stop," and then "Astern."

Just as she was gathering way, the moon came out clear. But they were not so near the ships now, and there was still an even chance of her getting off unobserved, in which case, should the sky cloud over again, they could make another attempt that night. So the *Caroline* was still moving slowly, cautiously.

But there were sharp eyes in the fleet. Though the watch was constant, it was keen, and just as those aboard the *Caroline* were beginning to think themselves safe, the glare of a Coston light and the flight of a rocket straight in their direction told them that they were discovered.

"We'll have to run for it now," said the pilot, "but we ought to get off handily enough."

As if in mockery of his confidence, two more rockets rose at the same instant, one in the south, the other in the southwest.

The pilot laughed aloud. "Damn such luck!" he said. "Well, it's all up, Captain. We may as well come down before they begin dropping shells instead of rockets on us." He stopped the engines as he said it.

At sight of the rockets, the passengers, Mrs. Townley and Celia, as well as the others, had come hurrying aft to the bridge.

"What's that you say, Pilot?" demanded Mr. Odell.

"They've caught us, sir, like a rat in a trap, damn them!"

Martin had been looking back at Bald-head, at the cruisers, at the sky. Now he spoke. "Not yet, I think, Pilot. One of us is going to try to get her off. Are you?"

"No, nor you either," said the pilot, — "not while I command this ship, and until we're outside Frying-pan I do. Mr. White," — he turned to the mate — "show some sort of a light before they begin firing on us."

"Mr. White," said Martin, "stay where you are."

Neither of these men had ever sailed under Captain Martin Carver before. They knew he had been a "wind-jammer," and steam had, away back in those days, a contempt for sail.

"I think the pilot is right, sir," said the mate. "They'd shoot us to pieces if we tried to get through in this light."

"I shall take this ship in," said Martin, very quietly. "Will you go in as second mate, or in irons as a mutineer? Pilot, leave the bridge!"

The pilot hesitated a moment, then went almost precipitately. Whatever menace may have accompanied the order to him was unspoken.

"Now, Mr. White?"

"Yes, sir," said the mate, simply.

"You will take the wheel yourself. I mean to try to take the *Caroline* across the Frying-pan. Put your helm hard over to starboard, please," and he signalled the engines, "Ahead, slow!"

And then, for long, long hours, or for a little under thirty minutes, according as one went by guess or by chronometer, they worked the *Caroline* across Frying-pan Shoals. There was, Martin knew, a pretty well-defined crease from one side to the other, not far from their present whereabouts, and, moving very slowly, taking soundings every ten fathoms, they felt their way along toward it.

Before he had found it Martin had an almost mutinous crew. They did not know him, to begin with. They had never gone with him through a hundred perils, as the old *Cross's* crew had. Even at that, for a dash, for anything that demanded the utmost effort of action, he could have carried them all, with a cheer. But this crawling along two miles an hour, with half a dozen cruisers converging upon them, with nothing to wait for but the beginning and the end of a rain of shot and shell, this was another matter; this, they said, was not what they signed for. They gathered, clamorous, protesting, at the foot of the bridge ladder.

"Look at the sky," said Martin, curtly. "I did before I started."

His speech was interrupted by the scream of a shell. "If they can't make better practice than that by moonlight, how will they see us in the dark? A little more to port, Mr. White. Now go back to your places. You'll have a yarn to spin for the next twenty years."

The skies had turned friendly at last; a heavy curtain of cloud was again rolling across. The next two or three shells improved the situation a little, for they showed what difficulty the cruisers were finding in getting the range. And three minutes later they found their channel.

Their channel, indeed! Slowly, even more slowly, stopping, backing, going ahead again into what promised to be deeper water, only to find the promise a delusion, but still gradually making progress, gradually leaving the cruisers behind, and at last, at last, under a black sky, coming out into deep water again.

"Starboard your helm, Mr. White," said Captain Carver; "lay the course northeast by north."

The mate knew his man by this time, and he was not surprised, but he grinned joyously as he spun the wheel over, and turned the *Caroline's* head landward toward Wilmington again that night.

"Mr. Pilot," said Martin, addressing a figure at the foot of the ladder, "will you take us in through New Inlet?"

He came on the bridge and took off his hat. "Thank you, sir," he said.

They slipped along close to the eastern side of Smith's Island, and the narrow extension of it to northward that divides Buzzard's Bay from the sea; then silently they approached the south end of the cordon of cruisers across New Inlet, close, close inshore, — for the *Caroline* would almost have tried her paddles on dry land after to-night's experiences, — and close, horribly close to the watching cruiser at the end of the line. They could hear the watch tramping her decks, they could hear the low hum of steam in her valves, and then the sounds faded into the distance astern.

Then, a light cautiously displayed on the shore side of the *Caroline*, and from the shore, low down, an answering beam, and another from higher up, giving the range. And a few minutes later, all need of caution past, they were safe under the guns of Fort Fisher.

In the gray dawn they came to anchor off Smithville, and as the *Caroline* might be detained there for some time, it was arranged that Mrs. Townley and Celia and Mr. Odell should go up to the city in a little steamer

which was about to start. As they were leaving, Mrs. Townley came up to Martin.

"I'm sorry it must be good-by," she said. "I hope that sometime — We owe you a great deal, Celia and I, and you won't think we've forgotten it, will you? And you'll let me say good-by for her, too. She — Oh, here she comes!"

Greatly to her mother's surprise, for that Mrs. Townley should say good-by for her had been arranged between them, she came straight up to Martin. She was not pale, as from a distance he had seen she was yesterday, and her eyes were bright as though unwearied by the long night's watching.

Their eyes met for the first time since — how well they both remembered it — the day in John Carver's library when her look had said she despised him and had denied him the reason.

What Celia saw was this face she knew so well, intrenched with lines which all the tempests of half a score of years had not put there; she saw his eyes — clear, steady, loyal — asking, pleading, for the reason.

And what he saw was a look that spoke, that pleaded, that seemed almost to cry out, and yet denied. He saw her eyes fill suddenly with tears, yet proudly hold level with his own.

She held out her hand. "Good-by," she said.

PART IV

THE SPY

CHAPTER X

In a small cottage on one of Wilmington's more modest streets the Townleys had lived since the day, three months ago, when Martin had brought them through the blockade. It was on that same day that they found Harper Junior, who had been wounded at Ball's Bluff, sick in the hospital. To this little house they had brought him, and here they had slowly nursed him back to health.

The time had gone swiftly, for in the hours not devoted to their own invalid they had been working might and main, making clothes, bandages, delicacies, for the other sons and fathers who were fighting so gallantly, sleeping wet and marching hungry for the Cause. For one week, whose hours had been so precious as to be almost painful, Colonel Townley himself had been with them. They had parted with him, and now they were facing another separation.

Harper had twice before appealed to the post surgeon to send him back, and had twice been condemned to a longer convalescence; but Fort Donelson had fallen since the last time, and today, after frowning over him for a while, he

delivered an opinion to the effect that the youngster had no business at the front for another fortnight, but, as he would insist on fretting himself into a fever at home, he might as well pack himself off at once. So the boy had joyfully got his traps together, put on his new uniform, and made his plans to start to-morrow.

Out of doors, the winter rain was pelting down steadily, and it was hard to keep a part of the cold and cheerlessness from getting within. They made the best they could of what means they had,—the best the South afforded,—but the room was only half lighted by the two poor candles, and only half warmed by the small stove. All of them had drawn up close about it, Mrs. Townley in the middle, with one of her children at either hand.

There was not much to say, or perhaps there was so much that it choked utterance. Even Harper, whose cheerful spirit was seldom clouded over, was often silent for long together; and the two women could hardly make head at all against the grim fact of the war and the grim uncertainty of the future, which lay so heavily on their spirits.

"Mother's quite tired out," said the boy, at last. "You mustn't let her work so hard, Celia. Don't you think she'd better go to bed?"

"I suppose we'd better all go. But we don't want to, do we, Mummy?"

"Oh, yes, presently," Harper answered. "But you mustn't wait another minute, mother; you've done too much to-day."

The mother rose, smiling, but rather faintly, "Don't stay up too long," and with a light touch of her lips on his forehead she was gone.

"What is it?" Celia demanded, with a good deal of surprise. "Secrets from mother!"

"Why, I don't know that they're secrets. But I want to have a little talk with you, Celia. I have wanted to have it for a long while, and this is our last chance. I — I hoped you'd tell me. But I can't go away and leave my little sister in trouble without knowing what the trouble is."

"Was I ever your little sister, Harper? Yes, I remember I was once. But Harper dear —" she leaned forward, resting her hands on his knees — "I'm a great deal older than you — so much older! And there isn't any trouble to tell, to talk about —"

He frowned thoughtfully, and was for a little while silent. When he began to speak, it was with a little hesitation.

"I know something — a very little — about it. Dolly has told me —"

She interrupted him with a dry little laugh, her lips bending in a sort of scornful amusement. "Oh, Dolly! Yes, Dolly is never going to speak to me again as long as she lives."

The hot color came flaming into his face; he rose, and drew himself erect. "There's no use in trying to talk about it, then. I am under a misapprehension. I thought you really cared for her." So far very stiffly, but as he went on he forgot this artificial dignity. "She cares for you. She's been loyal to you through everything. She's stood up for you, and when they tried to say things against you, she stopped them. And she does that yet. And if you aren't more loyal to her than you seem to be, why, I've been mistaken in you. That's all."

She looked at him, not hardly, as a moment ago, nor angrily, as he had expected, but very thoughtfully, very keenly, a little wistfully, and at last a smile came into her face. She rose, and went to where he stood, and kissed him.

"I'm sorry I hurt you, dear," she said. "I didn't altogether understand. And you don't understand, either. I do care for Dolly, very, very much. Not so much, perhaps, as you care for her, or as she cares for you. I'm very happy about that, if it's true, Harper. About her quarrel with me, time will wear that out, I'm sure, and I'll do my best to help it. It's nothing to make a mystery about. Mother knows all about it; in a way, she's included in it, too. We don't talk about it because it's a long story, and a very stupid one. You know a good deal of it already.

But if you like, I'll begin at the beginning and tell you all about it."

"I'd like to hear it very much," he said.

"Well, the beginning," said Celia, "was when we had just come back home. Everybody we knew wanted to hear about our adventures, as they called them. We really hadn't had any, except running the blockade, and that had been in all the papers and everybody knew it already. But that wasn't what they wanted at all. They wanted all the particulars about our stay in New York. And we just told them the truth, or part of it. You know what the truth is. You know how well the Carvers treated us, and how considerate they always were of our feelings. They made themselves our friends, too. And they simply jeered at the idea of our being in the way or putting them out at all, though of course we did. But if they hadn't been as nice as that, do you suppose we'd have lived with them, and have borrowed money of Mr. Carver and — Don't you know we'd have worked or starved to death rather than be under obligations to any other sort of people for one day? Oh, of course you do, but it makes me excited just to think about it!

"We didn't tell all that to everybody," she went on, "but when we did tell that gentlemen and ladies up North were just like gentlemen

and ladies anywhere else, and that we hadn't had any adventures at all, that no one hurt us or insulted us, or threatened us, or advised us to leave town, why, they just shook their heads and went on talking exactly as if we'd said they had done all these things. I know how they think about it. We thought so ourselves, once. When we sailed into New York harbor we thought we might be tarred and feathered, perhaps that very day. And we've felt dreadfully, dreadfully silly about it ever since. I don't wonder that people here think the way they do about it, but they ought at least to take our word for what happened to us. They wouldn't, though, and the more we said the worse it grew. And some people, not our friends of course, but some people who knew us and ought to know better, really think we've turned Yankee and have come back to be spies, or something!"

"More people than you think, I'm afraid," he said gravely.

"Well, I'm sorry. It is hard, because it makes us lonely and unhappy. It's worse for Mummy than it is for me. I haven't thought so very much about it. But it's not in our hands at all. If it must be so, it must. You wouldn't have us tell things that weren't true about people who were so good to us. We don't talk about it at all now, and that's the best

we can do. We can't unsay what we've said already."

"I know they were good to you," Harper admitted slowly, "and of course I wouldn't have you say they weren't. But their case is different. They are Southern sympathizers."

"Mr. Carver was, but not the others. Mrs. Carver wasn't at all, and Winthrop, you know, is in the Federal navy."

"Well, the captain is, of course — young Carver, who brought you through the blockade. It was the *Caroline*, by the way, that came through last night; did you know it?"

"And their friends weren't," Celia went on, not heeding the interruption. "I wish you could see Mrs. Carver. You know Mummy's in love with her."

"Her grandmother was a Virginian," Harper put in stubbornly. "You said so yourself."

"Whose grandmother wasn't? Now, Harper, don't you be silly, too. They're just as much Yankee, all of them, as it's possible to be. New England Yankees, at that, originally. But his being a Southern sympathizer hasn't any more to do with his being a gentleman than her having a Virginian grandmother is what makes her a lady. It isn't people's opinions that make them nice or not. Their opinions haven't anything to do with it, and that is what Dolly and I had our

quarrel about. Dolly said that an abolitionist couldn't be a gentleman, and I told her that I knew an abolitionist who believed in nigger equality and who wanted all the slaves set free, who was as good a gentleman, every bit, as you are, and whom I'd be proud to have for a brother."

She had used that last phrase once before, but now as she repeated the words she saw in them a secondary significance. Dolly could not possibly have seen it, of course, nor could Harper now, for neither of them knew whose brother this abolitionist was; still for an instant she felt that she had made an involuntary confession, had betrayed her secret, and with that feeling the color came surging into her face.

While she had been speaking he had paced the room moodily, but at the word "abolitionist" he stopped and stared at her in utter incredulity. And when, after an instant of silence, he saw her flush, his look changed to one almost of terror.

"Celia!" he cried, "what do you mean? You're not in love with a man like that! Sooner than let you marry such a hound I'd kill him. I swear to you I would. I'd kill him, if there was no other way, with my bare hands!"

The thought of a personal encounter like that between Harper and one of those great, lean Carvers almost brought a smile to her face.

"I'm not in love with him in the least, so you

can set your mind at rest. You won't have to kill him. But I might have been, easily enough; any girl might be. He's so fine and gallant and chivalrous and gentle; and he's beautiful, too, to look at, I mean. I don't love him, not the smallest bit in the world, the way you mean, but I'm very fond of him, and I hope he knows it."

"I don't care what he is, or what you think he is, rather. A man can't think and believe a degrading thing without being degraded."

"It hasn't degraded him," she answered thoughtfully. "It has ennobled him, if anything. Why, just suppose, Harper, that we were wrong. Suppose that after believing in a thing with all our might, and living it and fighting for it, we found we had been mistaken all the while, would that make us bad, or mean?"

Young Townley felt as a teacher of mathematics might feel if a refractory pupil refused to admit a belief that two and two will always make four. "Celia," said he, with the laborious patience of one whose patience is nearly exhausted, "Celia, let's get back to the beginning. You know we *are* right, don't you? And you're sure we're going to win in the end?"

"I want us to win," she answered slowly, "and I believe that the side that wins will be right." She made a long pause there. "Harper

dear, I have to be honest with you, don't I? I can't tell you anything that isn't quite true. If you'd asked me three months ago, even, if I was sure we were right, I'd have thought the question too silly to need an answer. I thought so, just as you do, of course. And now I want to think so. I want to with all my might, but I can't be sure. I can't, Harper."

At that his patience snapped. "I don't see, then, that the people who say you've turned Yankee are so very far wrong."

She made no reply, but with her hand over her eyes, to shade them from the candle-light, sat thoughtfully silent, while he, angry, astonished, speechless, paced back and forth at the farther end of the room.

How long this had endured neither knew, when they were brought sharply back to the present by a low but distinct knock at the street door. The summons, at that hour of night, was imperative.

Young Townley caught up the candle as he strode across the room, and flinging the door wide open barred the way with his presence, while, shading the flame with his hand, he peered out at the towering figure which had sought entrance.

"Captain Carver!" he exclaimed. "What is it? Will you come in?"

The captain had often been in port since his first memorable voyage, and Harper, wondering much that he never came to the house but discouraged from asking questions no less by his mother's manner than by Celia's, had nevertheless taken occasion to meet him.

Celia had already risen and was looking towards the door. On hearing the name of their visitor she turned a little pale and dropped her eyes, but, with an effort, held herself just as she was, facing the door. She heard him enter the room and the door click behind him.

"Lieutenant Carver," the voice corrected.

At the sound of it, rather than the sense, she gasped. "Winthrop," she cried, and then, under her breath, she repeated the name in clear astonishment over the wonder of his being there.

"I've come to see you," he said. His glance left her for a moment and rested on young Townley questioningly, as though searching for some memory of his face.

"My brother Harper," said Celia.

Winthrop's eyes were now on the Confederate's uniform. "I'm Lieutenant Carver, of the Federal navy," he said quite simply. "We're enemies, of course, Captain Townley, but I hope you'll think it not inconsistent with your duty to grant me an hour's truce."

Harper had not taken his eyes from him,

except for one wondering glance at Celia, since he came into the room. "Oh, I suppose," he now said abruptly, as though he had found a clew to his wonder at last, — "I suppose you're the head of that party of — of Federals" (the word came hard) "who held up the courier on the Jacksonville Road."

Winthrop smiled. "Do I get my truce?" he asked.

"You ask a good deal," said Harper, stiffly. "You've taken an unfair advantage, it seems to me. You come here in the middle of the night and offer me my choice between harboring a spy, a spy we've been trying particularly hard to catch for three days, too, or turning you over to the provost after you've thrown yourself on my mercy, and when you have some claim to it."

"That would be unfair," said Winthrop, as lightly as if the question at issue had been a purely academic one, "very unfair if I'd done it. But I don't throw myself on your mercy at all. It isn't a question of your turning me over to the provost, but of your trying to. And, if you don't mind my saying so, that's quite a different thing. I haven't come into the city without providing for a way out. If you decline the truce I shall do my best to overpower you and to escape. I think I have a fair chance to do it."

He paused there a moment, then, his voice a little more vibrant, more tense, but no louder, he went on, "As to my being a spy, I am that of course, for I am inside your lines and not in uniform; but I'll give you my word that I've come into Wilmington to-night for just one purpose, and that is to see your sister and to tell her something I want her to know."

Harper remained silent a moment after Winthrop had finished speaking, but not from doubt. The man, the deed, the telling of it, all had set his imagination ablaze.

"I've never been sorry before to have a Yankee for an enemy," he burst out at last, "but I am now. I'm sorry the truce must end in an hour."

"Thank you," said Winthrop, and they shook hands.

Harper hurried out of the room, only to return a moment later wrapped in a long rain-proof cloak. "Mother's asleep," he said, "and I don't believe it's best to wake her, do you? I'm going to stroll round outside and see that you aren't interrupted. You'd better draw the blinds a little tighter, too, Celia. It's late to be having visitors."

If the three young people had been their common-sense everyday selves, it is probable that at least one of them would have reflected that a

solitary figure in a cloak patrolling the house on a night like this would be as likely to attract the curiosity of a chance passer-by as anything that could be devised for that special purpose. But though Winthrop protested, of course, against his going out in the rain, it seemed to him, as to the brother and sister, a natural and fitting thing that, now the truce was agreed upon, its articles should be carried out in as handsome a manner as possible. It is precisely what he would have done had the circumstances been reversed. So in a moment more Harper's patrol was begun up and down the little veranda, and Winthrop was alone with Celia in the half-lit room.

She laid her hand upon his sleeve. "You're very wet," she said. "Take off your coat and let me hang it up to dry."

She helped him out of it, for he moved a little stiffly, and hung it behind the stove. It was soggy with three days' rain; an hour in the stove would hardly have dried it, but at least the water in it would be warm when he put it on again. The easy-chair was still where it had been when Mrs. Townley left it, and she made him sit there.

"You're cold and tired, I know," she said. "And, oh, — aren't you hungry?"

He had forgotten how many hours he had been fasting.

"Only for a talk with you," he said.

She drew another chair close to the fire for herself and waited for him to go on, but the silence was so long that it was she who broke it.

"It's so good to see you again, but it's such a wonder that I can't realize that it's wonderful at all. How did you do it?"

"We've been ashore about three days, I and a boat's crew. The boat's hidden in a marsh on Masonborough Sound. We've been getting some information the admiral wanted. The boat goes back to-night with my report, whether I'm there or not."

Again she waited for him to speak and again his silence compelled her to go on.

"I don't wonder you look older than you did — how long? — six months ago. Have you had many adventures like this?"

"No, it's been dull enough. We were on blockade here at Wilmington until about three months ago. We were detached for the Port Royal expedition, but we've been back on blockade ever since. I had a letter from mother that you had run the blockade, and she said she had word you had got through all right."

"Had word!"

"Yes. So I knew I should find you."

His mood had settled so strongly upon him that he let her exclamation go by quite unheeded.

The minutes were slipping away. "And what is it you've come to tell me?" she asked.

He pressed his lips tight together and looked long and fixedly into her face; then, "Not till I've asked you first," he said. "Celia!" The outburst of passion the one word carried almost frightened her. "Celia! isn't it different now? a little different? You didn't know when I told you before. You hadn't thought. I was just a boy to you. But we've lived so long since then. You've known all the while. Doesn't that make a difference? I was almost beside myself that day. I thought you meant to tell me there was some one else. You didn't say so. I remember every word you said. But wasn't I wrong, thinking you meant it? Celia, haven't you an answer for me?"

She was leaning forward a little in her chair, her elbow on the arm of it, her eyes fixed on the patch of bright red mica in the stove door. "It isn't very easy to be honest, is it?" she said. "And I want to be honest now, if ever I am going to be in all my life."

Her voice to her own ears sounded like a stranger's. Her words came slowly, reflectively, absently almost, as if — as was more than half the truth — she had been talking aloud to herself. They were strange words to say, but strangest about them to him, without the key,

inexplicable, was the note of self-scorn which vibrated through them.

"I liked you better than I've liked many people, at the very first," she went on, "and I grew to admire you and to be very fond of you. And that last day, the day you went away, I was proud of you. I've been all that ever since. Fond of you, proud of you."

She repeated the words as though they hurt her, as though she wanted them to hurt, and the pain was a sort of pleasure. He, astonished, perplexed, was trying to find words to interrupt her when she went on. "I think in that way I could grow to love you very much. I think I do love you already. But it isn't the way you want me to. Not at all."

"How do you know?" he demanded. He crossed in one stride to where she sat, and putting his hands almost roughly on her shoulders repeated, "How do you know it won't turn to the other if you give it a chance?"

She looked up into his eyes. Her voice was gentle again. "I know — the only way one can know, Winthrop."

His hands dropped away from her, and he began pacing the floor.

"It's all so different," she went on. "I suppose that somewhere it starts from the same place, but after that place it can't change. How

do you love me?" she demanded. "Would you go on loving me just as much if I'd done something detestably wrong, something so mean and bad that you despised yourself for loving me; would it make you love me all the harder? Perhaps it would. But I love you because you're nice to me, because you're brave and chivalrous and gentle and good. But if you did something wicked, not a brave bad thing, but a mean bad thing, I'd be sorry and I'd stop loving you. I wouldn't break my heart. I wouldn't wish I'd done the thing myself to have saved you from doing it."

She stopped, and turning in his stride he saw her face buried in her hands, her body racked with sobs, quivering. The last thought of his own case fled with the sight. There could be no comfort in words for a grief like that, but he seated himself on the chair arm and again his hand, gently this time, rested on her shoulder, while with the other he stroked her hair, till the caress, so cool, so brotherly, quieted her. When at last he began to speak it was about something else.

"Celia," he said, "what I've told you to-night wasn't what I came to tell you. It was what I promised myself I would not say. But when I found myself with you here, just ourselves, just as it might all have been, sometime, I broke

my promise. I came to tell you that I'm — Well, I think I've found my work. When you knew me in New York, it looked as though I should never find it. But I can fight. I pulled my commission out of the action at Port Royal. I've stopped beating my head against a wall. I'm doing something that I can do. I'd have been happy at it if I could have forgotten just one half hour. But I kept remembering how white your face was, and tired, that afternoon. I remembered every cruel, boyish word I'd said when I found I'd been mistaken, and how when you asked me to forgive you, I went away without saying I did, or owning that the mistake and the fault had all been mine. My head was full of wild, foolish things when I went out to the receiving ship that night, and it has seemed to me ever since as though I had said them all to you. I haven't been able to see your face except as it looked that afternoon, nor to bring back any of our happy days together without having that one come in the way. And I've felt as though I couldn't really face the world and begin my new life, until you and I had buried that. The only thing I've dreaded has been that something might happen to me before I could see you. But now it's said, and understood, too, isn't it, Celia?"

She had stopped crying by this time and was

drying her eyes. "Yes," she said, "you were good; it was like you to come to tell me." Sitting erect as she sat now brought her nearer to him, but she seemed untroubled by it. She settled her head more comfortably against his arm and essayed a little laugh, as she said, "You'll take away another wet, miserable picture of me if you remember how I look now."

He moved a little shyly away from her and took his old chair. Then, by way of keeping the talk going, he said, "Your brother's standing a cold watch, I'm afraid. By the way, how in the world did he know me?"

"Know you?"

"He called me by name. Don't you remember?"

She shot him a quick, puzzled look, which this time did not escape his attention; then as simply as possible she said, "I suppose he mistook you for Martin. He called you Captain."

"But how can he know Martin? And anyway it's nearly a year since Martin was in here with the *Cross*, and he called the name instantly. We'll have to ask him about it."

He was not looking at her, and the mention of his brother's name turned his mind in a new direction. "I'd like to hear something about the old man. Mother doesn't say anything about him in her letters. And I've got something to

make up there, too. He never told you, I suppose, how I misunderstood him that day in father's office?"

With the question he looked up into her face.

"Celia!" he cried, "what is it? You know something that I don't. There's a clew to all this that I haven't got. Won't you tell me? You must tell me."

He knew, though, before she said the words. The disconnected bits flashed into place in his mind while he was waiting for her words, — the letters from Nassau, the silence as to Martin and his father, Harper's quick calling of his name and Celia's surprise that he should be surprised at it.

"It was Martin who brought us through the blockade. Your father and Mr. Odell own the steamer between them. He is running it for them."

"Martin," he said softly, "Martin!"

He sank low in his chair, gazing in a brown study at the fire while she watched his face, reading the thoughts that ran through his mind, recognizing the anger, the shame, the pity, the wonder as now one, now another, appeared. Wonder was predominant. There could be no mitigating motive for such a treason. Nothing so generous, even, as the wish to avenge a private injury at his country's expense; nothing better than the commonest, sordidest greed for gain.

And even at that, it was no grand betrayal, once for all, for a great prize. It was a treason by way of trade! And — here was the wonder — this traitor was his brother, Martin.

As Celia watched his face she waited for the flash of intelligence that would come when he should put together the two halves of her secret that were both in his hands. After a while he began to speak.

"Those chaps are brave enough, I know. We ran one of them into a corner one night — just before Port Royal, that was — and he took his craft right across the shoal under fire and with a falling tide, and got her off, too."

"That was Martin," she said; "it was the night he took us in!"

"It was like him — that part of it," he commented. "But why did they go into it? Why couldn't it have been something else? Why couldn't he have enlisted squarely in the rebel army?" (He did not notice his use of the word, and she did not resent it.) "Why couldn't they have done anything but trade in their country's troubles? It's the meanness of it!"

The recurrence of the word did it. "Not a brave bad thing, but a mean bad thing." He remembered, and she saw the flash she had been waiting for.

She met the quick, wondering look that fol-

lowed it. "Yes," she said wearily, "you understand it all, now."

Again it was his brother's name he repeated slowly, thoughtfully. They sat for a long time as they had sat before, he gazing at the fire, remembering, pondering, wondering, and she watching his face, not very hopefully, yet still with a pathetic eagerness as though from him might come some comfort.

At last he rose and took his steaming coat from behind the stove. She helped him into it silently. Then he turned and took both her hands.

"It's a tangled skein, Celia," he said, "but not a broken one. I can't see my way in it at all, any more than you can. But I'm going to believe that somehow our three lives will straighten themselves out."

He kissed her two hands. "Good-by," he said. "I hope that God will bless you always."

"I don't want you to go," she cried, clinging to his hands. "Hear the rain!"

"It's my friend to-night. The harder it beats and the stronger it blows, the better for me."

"Good-by. God bless you and keep you safe."

Harper's long watch was over. "It's a wild night," he said as Winthrop came out on the veranda. "You'd better take this cloak of mine."

"Thank you," answered the other, "but you know I'm travelling light. I may have to run for it."

"My God!" muttered Harper, "I'm glad I don't know the pass for to-night. I believe I'd turn traitor and tell it to you if I did."

"I know the pass," said Winthrop. "But I'm too long-legged to be properly inconspicuous."

"They'll take you for your brother if they see you, just as I did. You're very like. And his ship is in to-day, you know, too. Well, good luck to you!"

They shook hands, and Winthrop strode away. At the nearest corner Harper saw him turn west, toward the river.

"I thought he'd head out for Masonborough," he said to himself.

A man he knew a little came up just then from the direction in which Winthrop had disappeared, and stopped to speak to him.

"I hear you're off to-morrow," he said. "Wish I had your luck. Who's that long-legged chap I passed back there? He looked familiar, but I couldn't quite place him."

"Don't you know Carver, of the *Caroline?*"

"Oh, to be sure. But he's shaved his beard. That's what misled me. Good night."

CHAPTER XI

It must have been about ten minutes later that Martin pushed back his chair from the table, at the opposite side of which sat Mr. Odell, and rose with the air of a man who has finished an uncongenial task. "I'm glad we've done so well at it," he said.

"Well! It's magnificent, my boy, and no smaller word will do."

They had indeed found this blockade-running trade incredibly profitable. When Mr. Odell had accompanied the *Caroline* on her first adventurous run into Wilmington, it had been with no intention of remaining for more than a week or two at the most, long enough only to introduce Martin among his correspondents in the city and to get the business started. But once ashore he had found himself in a veritable speculators' paradise. If at sea Martin had been prescient, wary, bold, Mr. Odell was all these things among the dangerous currents of finance, where Martin — who knew? — might prove as easy a prey to untrustworthy guides as he himself had been to the pilot. Reasoning thus he had rented a large building near the *Caroline's* dock, which

served as residence, warehouse, and office. There were many others who had done likewise, though few, if any, who proved so successful at it as he. They were regarded by the loyal Southerners in the city with a kind of horror, as birds of prey who were feeding fat on the very entrails of the Confederacy; but they had much power and could command with it a sort of consideration. Mr. Odell was not very sensitive to their sentiments so long as the easily manipulated market was so kind to him, so long as every variation in the wildly erratic price of gold left so much of it in his pocket, so long as he could send such reports to Mr. Carver at Nassau as the one he and Martin and a couple of clerks had just spent half the night drawing up.

"By the way, I saw a friend of yours to-day," Odell remarked casually, as Martin was leaving; "and in no very comfortable predicament, either."

Martin would have let the first half of the sentence go without comment, but the second roused him. "What," he demanded, "what do you mean?"

"It was old Dearborn of your father's fleet. He used to command the *Centaur*, didn't he? You must have known him well."

"What was the matter with him?"

"He was one of a lot of Yankee prisoners, wait-

ing to be sent down to Andersonville. They got him in the cutting out up at Newbern, I believe. There was another young sailor with him, a *Centaur* man, but I didn't ask his name. I only had a chance for a word with him."

"Andersonville," Martin repeated. Then — "I've known him since I can remember. He used to call me 'Captain' when I was no higher than that table. He's an old man to go to a hell like that. I'd like — " Martin made a thoughtful pause. "I'd like to do a little cutting out on my own account, and carry him off through the blockade to Nassau. He'd do as much for me any day."

"Cutting out is hardly in your line, my boy," said Odell, dryly. "You can't run with the hare and the hounds too."

"I wonder," said Martin, "that he managed to be in it at all. Semmes took his parole when he took the *Centaur*, and I didn't know there'd been any exchange."

Odell made no reply, but not because he could not have answered Martin's question. In the half dozen words they had had time to exchange, the old man had told him that he had not been exchanged, that he was only waiting to be recognized to pay the penalty of having violated his parole. But a less shrewd man than Patrick Odell would have seen the effect the revelation

of this to Martin would be likely to have. He regretted having mentioned the incident at all. The young captain needed careful management. He was worth it. He was the absolutely essential element in these enterprises, and his weight in fine gold would not recompense his loss.

"It's very late," he said, glancing at his watch. "Yes, half-past twelve. Off to bed with you!"

Martin wished him an abrupt good night, and a moment later was walking slowly toward the *Caroline's* wharf.

The wharf was not well lighted, and as he approached the gangway he was sharply challenged by the watchman's voice, "Who goes there?" and the man himself came quickly up out of the shadows.

"I guess you know me,"—turning so that the light fell on his face. "Why, what's the matter with you, man?"

There was more than amazement in the man's look, there was terror. "You've just gone aboard, sir. I'd swear it if I was about to die, you went aboard not five minutes ago. I saw you as plain as I see you now. I saw you'd shaved off your — Good God! You — you were without your beard five minutes ago, sir."

"You've been asleep — that's plain enough, anyway. Keep better watch than that for the rest of the night."

He strode across the gangway with a curt nod that cut short the watchman's confused protestations, mounted to the upper deck, and was on his way through the saloon to his own cabin when he encountered the steward, who was sitting up waiting for his last orders for the night.

Here again was an astonishment hardly less than the watchman's.

"How did you get out of your cabin, sir? I've been here since you went in five minutes ago. I haven't had my eyes off the door."

"You've been asleep, I suppose," said Martin.

"I was asleep before you came aboard. I didn't wake till just as you were going through the door. But I'd swear I hadn't slept since."

Before he had finished speaking, Martin had reached his cabin door, entered, and shut it behind him. That some one had been there but a moment or two before was evident enough. The open window, large enough, though barely, for egress, and the indentations in his bed showed how he had escaped.

He looked quickly about the little room. There had been no robbery. Everything was quite as he had left it save that a large book had been taken down from the shelf and lay on his desk. A torn scrap of paper protruded from its leaves. He whipped it out and read at a

glance the single line which was scrawled across it: —

"*For God's sake, old man, try to think what it means.*"

There was no signature, but there needed none. His brother's curiously characteristic hand could not be mistaken. He tore the scrap to shreds and crumpled them in his hand.

"Winthrop?" he said, aloud, but very softly.

Then, leaving the cabin door open, he went out into the saloon again. The steward was still there. "Notice that I'm coming out this time," said Martin. "No, there's nothing wrong, and I don't want you for anything."

He descended to the main deck, and going to the off-side side just abaft the paddle-box, looked down into the water. A small gig which had been made fast there was gone. He flung the little scraps of paper abroad over the surface of the water, made as if to go away, but changed his mind and climbed over the rail instead. Holding fast with one hand, he groped about in the dark with the other, and presently found what he expected, half the gig's painter ending clean and square with what must have been a single slash of a sharp knife. He loosened it swiftly, flung it too into the river, and stepping back over the rail, returned to the upper deck and his cabin.

"Don't turn in just yet," he said to the steward as he passed him. "I may want you for something, after all."

He sat down at his desk and let his clasped hands drop on the table before him while he stared, sightless, at the little dressing mirror that hung opposite him.

What did it mean?

Clearly that Winthrop had been there. He could have got into the city only as a spy or a prisoner. What then? Why did he come to the *Caroline?* Not for shelter, for he had hardly been aboard five minutes. He had been seen in the streets, no doubt, had been mistaken for his brother, and had used the mistake to help him in getting off. And the single riddle of a message he had scrawled and left for his brother's eye. It was an appeal, all he had had time to write, all he had dared to write lest it should fall into other hands, but clearly an appeal for help. He was out on the river now beyond help, except — and Martin, the sweat standing out on his face, almost gasped with relief as he got the clew — except as Martin might delay and confuse pursuit by assisting in the mistake as to their identities for a few hours longer!

How that was to be done was another question. He leaned back in his chair, and, in his perplexity, rubbed his hand in his close-cropped

beard. He could see his face in the glass, and the action gave him a hint. He remembered the watchman's words, "You were without your beard five minutes ago, sir."

He flung open the cabin door. "Steward," he called.

The man had served with him only since the *Caroline* had found her new name, but Martin's long years at sea had not been wasted. He was as confident of the steward's faithfulness and devotion as if the man had been one of the old *Centaur's*.

"Steward," he said, "for a day or two you may see and be ordered to do some things you don't know all the bearings of. You may think you understand them when you don't. But unless I'm mistaken in you, you'll do your duty and not talk. When people ask you questions they have a right to ask, you'll answer them, and you'll tell the truth as far as you know it, but not till then, and not then unless the people have a right to know. I want you to begin by shaving me."

"Shaving you, sir! Shave your beard! I never tried above half a dozen times to shave any one but myself in all my life!"

"Well, bring your razor and a pair of scissors and make the best job you can of it. And bear a hand about it, please. I'm in a hurry."

The operation was, considering the circumstances, got through more or less successfully. Martin at least seemed to be satisfied with the result, and his opinion on such a topic might be taken as final. But the steward, in spite of the warning that he might not understand, was almost inclined to doubt his captain's sanity when, after having repeatedly exhorted him to hurry, after having with manifest haste, though with great care, washed away the lather and stanched his cuts, Martin suddenly became again his leisurely, deliberate self.

"Tell the watchman, will you, that my gig has broken adrift and gone down the river, and that if he can find it to-morrow I'll pay him for his trouble. That's all I'll want of you to-night, I'm sure," he said. "You can turn in now as soon as you like."

"You aren't going out anywhere?" demanded the steward.

"Not a bit of it. I'm going to bed. Oh, you won't be able to figure it out. But you will, I'm sure, be able to remember your instructions. Good night."

It was in no disloyalty to Martin that the steward, convinced that he must have some mysterious errand that night, sat up till morning, wide awake, listening with all his ears for some sound which might give him a clew to the mys-

tery. It was clear, unconquerable, human curiosity. His vigil had no reward, however, and about dawn, quite worn out, he fell asleep.

The captain's reasoning had been good enough. When a fugitive making his escape in a row-boat leaves a clean-cut half of its painter behind, in flat contradiction of the plausible excuse that the boat had worked loose and drifted off, it may be taken either that he is in a great hurry or that he is not in the way of thinking of small details. In either case one may reasonably expect to find the chase hot upon his heels. All the while the steward had been shaving him, Martin had been in instant expectation of hearing the provost guard come tramping aboard the *Caroline*. But once his beard had been made away with, there was nothing to do but wait for the file of soldiers who were coming to make him prisoner. With that economy of force which is instinctive with men accustomed to perils, he tumbled into his bunk and slept the night out as soundly as though nothing unusual could be expected to interrupt it.

He was alarmed, on waking, to find that it was morning and that nothing had happened. He might, after all, have misunderstood the enigmatic message, or the chase might have swept right by him, undisturbed by the attempt to leave a false scent behind. Winthrop might,

hours ago, have been taken. Still there was nothing he could do. His best course was still to wait.

He sent out for the morning newspaper, but it was, it seemed to him, ominously silent on the subject of the night's events, and it was with a very troubled mind that he sat down to breakfast. But before he had finished the steward came to him, and, with a tone full of perplexity and apprehension, said that the commandant wished to see him.

"Good!" said Martin, cheerfully; "show him into my cabin."

Half a minute later he followed the officer into the little room and begged him to sit down.

The commandant looked at him steadily for a long moment before he accepted the invitation. When he spoke, it was with the hesitation of a man deciding between different courses.

"Captain Carver," he said at last, "I have a very tangled skein in my hands, and I've come for your help in unravelling it. I'm sorry that I must begin by asking you to tell me where and how you spent last evening."

Martin had long been prepared with an answer to that question, though he had not expected that it would be propounded so politely. But he took quite as long about giving the answer as the other had taken over the question. Then he

spoke very deliberately. "I spent last evening, all of it, with Mr. Patrick Odell, in his office."

The commandant was annoyed. "What you say, sir, may very well be true, but if it is true, why do you use that manner? You speak as if it were not true and you did not care to pretend that it is."

"You can easily discover whether it is or not by referring to Mr. Odell."

This was no better, for Mr. Odell, though a power in the city and entitled to some consideration, had too much interest in this case to be a satisfactory witness.

"The matter is serious, Captain Carver," said the commandant, sharply. "There was a spy in the city last night. He overpowered a soldier on picket duty, was seen at various points about the city, and was last seen coming down toward this steamer; several persons besides the soldier himself have identified him more or less certainly with yourself, remarking that you had shaved your beard, as I observe you have. I trust you may be able to clear yourself, for your own sake of course, but more for the sake of those who have the misfortune to be implicated with you in the matter. I'm anxious to give you every chance, every assistance in my power, if only you will meet me frankly. But if you rely on my regard for them to save you from the conse-

quences of what you may have been doing last night, you will rely too far."

The start which Martin could not repress at the words "those who are implicated with you," had not interrupted the commandant's speech, nor even, it seemed, caught his attention.

"I've told you all that I can tell," said Martin, in his natural manner.

"Then I must put you under arrest. Are you willing to give me your word that you will not try to leave this ship?"

"Perfectly," said Martin. "I promise not to leave this ship until you give me permission. And I shall regard that promise as binding, whether you see fit to place me under guard or not."

The commandant took his leave, after a curt good morning, and Martin was left to grapple with his new problem. So Winthrop had made the Townleys a visit, had allowed them, too, to be entangled in the net thrown to catch him! Such a possibility had occurred once to Martin's mind, but he had dismissed it at once as impossible. But there could be no doubt of it now. He knew as well as if the commandant had spoken their names.

About the middle of the morning appeared an extra edition of the newspaper, and Martin read it eagerly. The first alarm had occurred at mid-

night, when a picket was found to be missing. A search was made for him; but, as he had been recently drafted, it was supposed until early in the morning that he had deserted. But just at sunrise he had been found in an abandoned hut in the outskirts of the town, bound fast and gagged. His story was that he had been suddenly and noiselessly set upon by a man of gigantic size and strength, who had easily overpowered him, and after threatening him with instant death if he made a sound, had carried him bodily to this hut, where he had tied him up at leisure. He was very positive in his identification of his assailant as a man well known in Wilmington by reason of frequent periodic visits he was in the habit of making to the city through the blockade. The light was very faint, and the man disguised by the absence of the beard he ordinarily wore, but the picket would admit no doubt as to his identity.

The article went on to say that the person under suspicion had been seen about the streets at a later hour by various persons, some of whom had also remarked the absence of his beard, and that he had finally been seen to return to his ship. "An arrest," it added, "has in all probability already been made."

That was definite enough to be of real aid to Winthrop, supposing he had not already made

good his escape, but the thing Martin had dreaded to find was not there. There was no reference, however oblique, to the Townleys.

The early part of the day wore away slowly for Martin. He had expected a visit from Mr. Odell, but whether for reasons of his own or for the commandant's reasons he stayed away. A little after dinner he heard a low knock at his door.

"May I come in?" said a voice.

He flung the door open. "You!" he said, almost in a whisper, "here?"

Celia's eyes were slow in rising to his face. When they did there was no astonishment in them, only a pathetic bewilderment. The same note was in her voice when she spoke. "I don't understand," she said.

She did not take the chair he had placed for her. When he had closed the door, she repeated, "I don't understand. I know so little about it. Do you know any more? He was at our house last night for a while — Winthrop, I mean."

It was a madly reckless thing — her coming to see him. The commandant in allowing them all so much liberty had very likely, Martin thought, cherished a hope that they would help him solve his mystery, if only he gave them rope enough, but he could have had in mind nothing like this. It made a situation, already bad enough, im-

mensely worse. But with his first glance at her he comprehended how completely overwrought she was, how little mistress of herself. And he would not have uttered a word of remonstrance if her visit had condemned him to the gallows. She seemed, however, to feel what was passing in his thoughts, for before he answered, she added: —

"I ought not to have come. But I read in the papers about it; and how he had come here. And then the commandant came and said he had already been arrested — and I had to know. Did he come here, and did they find him because he came?"

"They haven't found him, or I hope they haven't. He was mistaken for me, it seems, as he came this way, came aboard the *Caroline* and escaped down the river in my gig that was moored on the off-shore side of the ship. Then the commandant came along this morning and arrested me."

"He did come here? And you saw him?" There was a new note of excitement in her voice as she asked the questions, which Martin could not understand. It was a moment, too, before he saw that the pronoun referred to Winthrop.

"He came aboard five minutes ahead of me, it seems. No, I didn't see him. He left a note

here on my table. That's how I knew he'd been here."

"He left you a note," she said rather breathlessly, as though prompting him to go on.

"I couldn't make it out, exactly. It was very short, and a good deal of a riddle. But I guess I've done what he wanted me to. You see he'd been mistaken for me, so I shaved off my beard to help the mistake along. It's only good for a few hours' delay at best, but a few hours may make all the difference to him."

"And you're making them think *you* are the spy!" Her face flushed and her tired eyes seemed to grow bright again.

"Not exactly. But when the commandant called this morning I didn't give him much satisfaction. So he ended up by putting me under arrest. You said he came to see you this morning. Can you tell me what he said?"

"I hadn't told mother about it at all yet, when he came. We didn't think we ought to tell her last night, and to-day I was waiting till after Harper had gone. It seemed better to do it that way. But he came just after she'd said good-by to Harper, before I had a chance to tell her. It nearly killed her. He said there had been a Federal spy in the city and that we were suspected in connection with it. And he said the man was already arrested."

"What did you tell him?"

"I said we hadn't done anything wrong, but there wasn't anything either of us would tell him, then. And then he went away."

This was not very intelligible to Martin. The other person included in the "we" could neither be Winthrop nor her mother.

He had a question on his tongue, but checked it as he heard footsteps approaching the door, the step of some one in a hurry. Then the door, without any preliminary formalities, burst open, and the person burst into the room. It was the commandant.

His first words, addressed to Celia, might have been an echo of Martin's own. "You!" he cried, "here?"

He closed the door behind him. Then, "Are you young people quite mad?" he demanded, "or are you trying to compel me to punish you for last night's performance? As for you" — he turned to Martin — "your ruse can't be kept up any longer. I know, absolutely, that you are not the man who overpowered the picket, nor the man who visited Mrs. Townley's last night. I know that he, whoever he was, came here, to this ship, that the watchman saw him, and that if he is not concealed about here he has fled by the river in the gig which your mate tells me is missing. I have parties out looking for him

who will search every swamp and thicket between here and Smithville, and unless he has some means of getting off to sea we shall find him. But that has nothing to do with your case. One of you harbored that spy last night, and the other assisted him to escape. The penalty for these offences is extreme, and I want you to realize it fully."

"We haven't done anything wrong, either of us," said Celia, defiantly. "We're not ashamed of what we've done — we'd be ashamed if we hadn't done it. And if you knew, you'd say so, too. He wasn't a spy at all, really."

"Who was he in the first place? — Oh, you needn't be afraid to tell me his name. That isn't what we shall catch him by."

"He is my younger brother," said Martin, "Winthrop Carver, of the Federal navy."

"Lieutenant Carver," corrected Celia. The quick look that passed between them, Martin's of interrogation, Celia's of something like triumph, did not escape the keen eye of the commandant, though he did not know exactly what to make of it.

"And you say he didn't come as a spy," he proceeded ironically. "How did he come? With a flag of truce?" He wondered that it had not occurred to him before that a little anger kindled in her against himself, would force

the truth out of her reluctant mouth, when it could not be drawn forth with threats of the direst tortures.

"Of course he came as a spy. He was inside our lines and not in uniform. But he didn't come *to* spy."

"Why, then?"

"He came to see me."

The commandant laughed shortly. Then, intercepting a warning look Martin was directing toward her, "Oh, your turn will come presently, Captain. Don't interfere, please," he said. "And so" — this to Celia again — "you tell me that this Federal officer came ashore, broke through our lines, took his life in his hands — good Heavens, no! he balanced it on the tip of a single finger — just for an hour in your company? I'm sorry to seem ungallant, but I can't take your sweetheart's pretty compliments so literally."

"It wasn't a compliment. It wasn't to me he said it. He gave his word to —"

She stopped short, her eyes wide with terror. "Oh! — Oh!" she breathed. "What have I said? What shall I do?"

The appeal was to Martin, but it was not he who answered. It seemed almost that he had not heard.

"Tell the truth," said the commandant. "Tell the truth if you value your brother's life, if you value his honor."

There was no triumph in his tone, nor any trace of the irony he had put into it to get the girl's confession from her. It was very grave, but very pitiful.

"Was he there when Mr. Carver came?" he went on. "And was it he who stood guard on the veranda?"

She looked at him wildly a moment, then flung herself down before him, clasping his knees. "Oh, he didn't do anything wrong, he didn't truly." She did not voice her words at all, but still spoke in a horrified whisper. "You couldn't do anything to him! He's just a boy! I'll tell you all of it, every word of it! But you must believe me!"

"There, there, dear," said the commandant, in evident distress, raising her gently. "I'll believe you, of course. I knew your mother when she was no older than you, and I'll believe you as I'd have believed her twenty-five years ago, or as you believed your Yankee sweetheart last night. There, there! Take all the time you want."

It was a little while before she could command her voice, but she told, very minutely, all that led up to Harper's lonely patrol on the veranda.

After she had finished, the commandant sat a long time, silent and with bent head. When at last he spoke, it was to Martin.

"And what can you add to the story, Captain?" he asked.

Martin seemed to force himself out of a profound revery to the consideration of the question. And even as he told his story, he spoke absently, though he told it all. How he had thrown the severed end of the boat's painter into the river, how he had shaved his beard, how he had sent the watchman on his quest of the missing boat.

"You say he left a note for you. Can you show it to me, or will you tell me what it said?

"I destroyed it, but I can repeat it. It said, 'For God's sake try to think what it means.' There was no signature."

"That was all?"

Martin nodded.

"And what did it mean?"

"I thought I knew," said Martin, very slowly. "I acted accordingly. But I'm not sure now that I didn't misunderstand."

There was another long silence, broken at last by the commandant.

"Well, well," he said, "this will bear sleeping over. I'll remove your arrest, Captain, but I'll ask you not to leave the city without my permission. As for you, my dear," putting his hand on Celia's head, "you've had about expe-

riences enough for one twenty-four hours. You'd better let me take you home to your mother."

They had left the cabin before Martin spoke. "Celia," he said.

She stopped, and came back to the doorway, the commandant walking on a little farther.

"Celia," said Martin, "I think I understand partly; I don't want to talk about it now, but may I come sometime and tell you? May I come to-morrow night?"

CHAPTER XII

"Are you quite easy," the commandant asked after they had walked several squares in silence, "as to the state of your mother's health and spirits? I thought she looked pretty well pulled down when I saw her this morning."

"She's been working too hard," said Celia, a little surprised at the abruptness of the question.

"I asked about her health and spirits, but I must confess I was thinking more about the latter. Isn't there anything besides the work which makes it hard for her in these days?"

"You mean the things they have saying about us, I suppose," she said a little impatiently. "Of course that has been hard, but it can't be helped. People have been very silly, but I suppose they will get tired of gossiping about us some day. Till then we'll have to console ourselves with knowing how silly it all is."

"It may have been silly once," said the commandant, curtly, "but after last night — "

"Last night? Do they know about that?"

"Where have your eyes been since we left the *Caroline?* Busy with pretty fancies of one sort and another, no doubt, but if they'd been as wide

awake as they generally are, you wouldn't have asked the question."

She had, indeed, as often lately, been quite abstracted from her present surroundings, but now she was aware that people had been staring at her. Some scraps of talk that had lodged in her ears now came to her full consciousness and brought an angry color into her cheeks.

"It will be hard for her," she said.

"I wonder —" the commandant found his suggestion a hard one to make and he hesitated for the least irritating words in which to dress it — "I wonder if it wouldn't be wise to stand out of the storm until it blows over, and if it wouldn't blow over quicker if you did, — if you went back to Nassau, let us say, for a month or two."

"No!" she cried hotly. "They can think what they please and do what they please. We haven't done anything wrong, not a thing in the world that we're ashamed of, or that we wouldn't do over again to-morrow. And as for the busybodies, we'll just let them buzz."

"Listen, young lady." The commandant's tone was peremptory. "Listen to a little commonsense. It may have been the busybodies who started it, but after last night's escapade there's only one thing that people with sense enough to add two and two can think. Now, it's all

very well for a young girl who has a handsome young lover — "

"He isn't," said Celia. "At least — you don't understand."

"Hm," mused the commandant. "Well, in any case, you seem to have something that occupies your mind pretty well. It may be easy for you to snap your fingers at what people will say, but for your mother to be branded as a traitor, for her to see her old friends, people who have been her friends since she was no older than you, refusing to look at her, shrinking away from her as though she were contaminated — "

"The brutes!" she whispered. "But she'll think as I do. When they see how they're mistaken, and when they come and say they were mistaken and beg our pardon, then we'll go and be glad to go. But we won't run away — we won't! That would be confessing we'd done wrong. And we won't disgrace father and Harper just to save ourselves a little discomfort. We haven't done wrong, and some day they'll see it and be sorry."

"I believe," he said, "that you didn't mean to do wrong, but let me tell you, my dear, that the whole affair last night was incredibly, almost criminally, foolish, and if you did it all again as you just now said you would, it would be downright criminal, and no mincing words about it.

It may all end happily this time. This Yankee madcap of yours may get off. I almost hope he will — not that I won't go right on trying to catch him; that's what war means. But he's had incredible luck, and thanks to his brother he has a long start, and he may make it good. But I suppose he's mad enough to try to come back. Judging from his other performances, he might do it well enough. If he does, the chances are a thousand to one that we'll get him. Do you know what that would mean? Do you know what would have to happen, and what would happen to you if you tried to shelter him or get him off?"

He could feel her hand quivering where it rested on his arm. "There, there, dear," he said, "think it over. Ask your blockade-running Yankee captain what he thinks about it. He's got common-sense enough for all of you. Ask him if he doesn't think he'd better take you back to Nassau with him."

They had reached her gate, and with a brief word of farewell he left her, not less indignant with him, for the moment, for all she comprehended how great a debt she owed him or that she unwillingly suspected that there might be more than a grain of truth in what he said. It was irritating, at best, to have one's heroics brought about one's ears in this sort of way, and

as she walked up the path towards the house, she said to herself that he'd see that even if they were all silly that they had minds of their own, and if he wanted them to leave town he'd better give orders to that effect in so many words.

But her mother opened the door for her, and the sight of the almost feverish eagerness in her face brought her out of this train of thought in a flash.

"It's all right, Mummy," she cried; "as right as possible."

"Tell me all about it as quickly as you can," said Mrs. Townley; and then, unconscious that she was delaying the recital, she went on, "I'm so glad you've come back. I'd begun to worry for fear Harper might be concerned in it. That was silly of me, wasn't it, dear? But you're quite sure he's not, aren't you?"

"Yes, he's clear," she said, "and we're clear, and Winthrop isn't caught at all and they think he'll get off, and Martin isn't under arrest any more."

"Martin?"

"Oh, I'd forgotten you didn't know all about it. It seems so long ago." And then, bright-eyed, bright-cheeked, she told her mother the story,—told it as she had once before told her a story of the captain of the *Southern Cross*, proudly, as though he belonged to her.

Her mother made no comment when she had finished, and she herself sat silent awhile. Then she added, a little shyly, "He's coming to see us to-morrow night."

Looking up for some reply, she noticed what her absorption in her story had kept her from seeing before, how old her mother's face looked, how drawn, as if with physical pain. "What is it?" she cried. She slipped her arm around her waist and drew her down on the sofa beside her.

"I know," she said. "You're working yourself to death, and worrying too, and I've been a beast and I've put all my worries off on your shoulders, as though you hadn't enough of your own. But we'll do better after this, Mummy. Did you go to the sewing-circle to-day? — Why, Mummy!"

"Oh, don't ask me about it, dear. You'll be happier not to know, and I'll be happier not to tell it. But Celia," — and her voice had a note of terror in it — "what can we do? It wasn't only there, it was in the streets, it was everywhere. Celia, I'll never, never go out of that door again, not till the war is over. I don't think I can bear it. I think it will kill me."

There was a strangeness to the girl in the realization that it was her own support, her refuge, her mother, who lay quivering in her lap,

to be comforted, but there was a strange sweetness about it, too. She was surprised to find how cool she was, how quiet her hands were as they stroked the brown-gray head.

"It won't last forever, mother dear. People forget. And after all, we know —"

"It's not the people, it's not what they say that's the worst of it," said her mother, brokenly. "If I could be sure — Celia —" and her voice vibrated with a strange intensity — "Celia, are you sure that we are right, that the South is right?"

"No," the girl answered calmly. "I've tried to, I've tried with all my might. And then I pretended I was sure so hard that I almost believed it. But when Harper asked me that, last night, I had to tell him that I wasn't."

"You told Harper! And he said — What did he say, Celia?"

There was a moment's silence. "I think he understood," said the girl, deliberately.

"Mother," she went on, after a little silence. "Mother dear, don't you think perhaps we'd better go away?"

"Where could we go?"

"Perhaps they'd forget sooner if we went away. We could hardly do anything here that wouldn't make them suspect us all the more. They won't let us help any more, I suppose, at

the hospital or by making things. But when it's over they'll understand better, I hope."

"But where could we go?" her mother repeated. "It would only be worse anywhere else."

"I mean go away altogether. Go to Nassau, perhaps."

"I don't know," said her mother, wearily. "My head seems to be wrong somehow. I can't think any more to-day."

It became increasingly evident as the evening wore on that Mrs. Townley had pushed even her great endurance a little too far. Celia knew that it could be no new strain that had broken her, but one she had been carrying a long while, one that any vision less self-centred than her own had been during these last months must have seen. But with the sting of this self-reproach there came to the girl the glad, proud resolve that now, at last, she would lighten it, bear it all herself, not make it heavier. They played a desultory game of cribbage after supper, but before long, with gentle compulsion, Celia put her mother to bed.

The girl herself was well worn out after her twenty-four hours of intense experience, and when her mother had fallen asleep, and she had sat for half an hour in the silent house, trying to read, something like homesickness crept over

her. The sense that she could no longer cuddle her head, child-fashion, in her mother's bosom and be comforted came as acutely as a stab of pain.

"Don't you dare cry!" she said to herself, defiantly, as she was preparing to follow her mother to bed. "You've cried quite enough lately to last all the rest of your life. And if you haven't learned to walk alone yet it's time you did."

And yet, was she walking quite alone? Was there not a sense that some one else could help her? Some one strong enough to carry any load of trouble as easily as he had carried old John Carver in his arms that day when they had the news of Bull Run, some one brave enough not only to do but to wait, to steam slowly along under fire, taking soundings. It was strange the way this old feeling had taken possession of her again. Nothing had been explained. He was still a traitor. Yet now, at last, she believed with Winthrop that the skein would come untangled. "Ask your blockade-running Yankee what he thinks about it." The words had offended her when the commandant had said them, but she repeated them now to herself with a little sigh of contentment. "I will ask him to decide it when he comes to-morrow night — to-morrow night." And with that she fell asleep.

It was not to be to-morrow night, however. In the morning Celia woke to find her mother in a fever, unmistakably ill. She sent their one servant after the doctor, and awaited his arrival rather nervously. He told her, however, that there was nothing to be seriously alarmed about. They must keep her quiet for two or three days. "She really needs a long rest, though, not so much for her body as for her mind," he concluded. "Don't let her think any more than you can help for a long time; keep her diverted. And for a day or two, until this fever goes down, keep her absolutely quiet. It's important."

After he had gone she sat down to write a note to Martin. She told him of her mother's condition, and that, because of it, she must not ask him to come that night. So far the note had flowed easily enough off from her pen. Then, "I am very sorry," she wrote, "and I hope that by to-morrow night I can see you for a little while, if you can come then." She hesitated there. The note was done, all but the signature, but that— She knew how she wanted to sign it, and with a quickly intaken breath she wrote "Celia" under the last line.

There! She had spoiled it. And note-paper was already almost as scarce as bank-notes in

the Confederacy. It became, it may be added, a deal scarcer before Fort Fisher fired its last gun. But no, this note could be saved after all. She could write "sincerely" before "Celia," and "Townley" after it, and it would be as decorous as possible. She dipped her pen in the home-made ink. Of course she must do it. He had only called her "Celia" once in all his life without putting a "Miss" before it. But before she tried to write it the ink had dried on her pen.

She heard her mother in the next room stirring uneasily, waking from a feverish slumber. She dropped the pen, folded the bit of paper as it was, and sealed it. Then she went in to her mother.

That day, passed, almost every moment of it, at the invalid's bedside, was almost as good for Celia as it was for her mother. While Mrs. Townley slept, as she did through many hours, Celia read an old novel; when she waked they talked about old times or played cribbage together. The only break in these employments was the return of the servant who had taken Martin's note, with his reply that he would come to-morrow evening. A week ago a day like this would have tortured her, but the tempestuous twenty-four hours just passed seemed to have worked a transformation, seemed to have left her some one else. The old, unhappy restless-

ness was gone, and the new contentment was strangely sweet by contrast.

The next day began somewhat more eventfully, but they were all events of a pleasant sort. Mrs. Townley was much better, to begin with, was almost her old self again, it seemed. Then the morning's mail brought a note from Harper, and the morning's newspaper, confessing that it had been misled by a most extraordinary chain of circumstances into suspecting Captain Martin Carver of having been the spy, now formally withdrew its charges, stated that new evidence had placed him entirely above suspicion, and offered him its apologies and congratulations. It added that though search for the spy was still being kept up, it was generally though regretfully admitted that he had, in all probability, already made good his escape to the blockading fleet.

Harper's note had given Celia an idea, and immediately after their midday dinner she prepared to put it into execution.

"I think, dear," she said to her mother, "that if you can spare me half an hour, I'll go and see Dolly."

"Do you want to go?" her mother asked, a little nervously. "Won't people — aren't there any staring at the house as they were that day?"

"If there are," she laughed, "I hope they may see enough to reward their pains."

For all that, before she reached the Sherwins' house, she was hurrying faster than she had meant to hurry and her face was flushed with anger.

It was Dolly herself who opened the door and who tried hard to cloak her surprise under her dignity when she saw who her visitor was. Celia slipped inside the door without waiting for the rather tardy invitation.

Dolly closed the door behind her and then, drawing her dignity a little tighter about her, waited. Celia was looking at her silently. Something not quite a smile was on her lips; something not quite an appeal was in her eyes. "Dolly!" she said.

The cloak fell away. "Oh, Celia, Celia, I'm so glad you've come back."

"I was a beast," said Celia. "I didn't know it, but I was — to mother, and to you and Harper. We had a note from Harper this morning. I thought perhaps you'd like to see it."

"I would, very much."

"Oh, you little hypocrite!" laughed Celia, drawing her up close in a tight hug and kissing her burning face. "You'd like to hear from him, wouldn't you? As though you hadn't a great

long letter of your own. Yes, you have. I can hear it crackle this minute. Now tell me about it, instantly."

It was a good deal more than a half hour they spent together, but at last Celia said she must go back. "Mother's not well. She's been having a bad time lately. You know about it, of course. I think, Dolly, that perhaps we'll go away, go back to Nassau, I mean, or to some place like that. I don't believe she can stand it here after these last few days."

Dolly's eyes were big with questions, and Celia knew what they were as well as if they had come to her lips.

"Dolly," she said, "I couldn't tell you quite all of it — yet, but if you want me to, I'll tell you almost all."

"You needn't tell me anything, unless you want to."

"Some day," said Celia, "you shall know *all* about it; every word. That will be better, won't it? But Dolly, whatever you hear, or have heard, you'll believe me, won't you, that we haven't done anything wrong? We haven't done anything that Harper doesn't know about, and that he doesn't think was right."

"He can think what he pleases," said Dolly, with splendid independence. "I'll believe you always, Celia, and — and I always have. They

will say things if you go away. But then they'll say them anyway."

She kissed Celia as if this was, already, their parting. "And I'll just tell them," she added, "that they'd better not try to say them to me."

The rest of the afternoon wore away rather slowly, but the twilight came at last, and Celia slipped off to her own room, to get ready, she said, for supper. She was a good while about it, and when she returned, carrying her lighted candle with her, her mother uttered a little exclamation and then laughed softly, a laugh that had more mirth in it than Celia had heard from her lips in many weeks.

Celia blushed, but she smiled too. Then, "Will he think it's very silly of me, Mummy?" she asked.

Her mother only laughed again, but this seemed to be answer enough for the girl. "I should think one might be allowed to look respectable once in a while," she said.

To the more enthusiastically loyal all through the South, it seemed unpatriotic to buy any but the sternest necessities of the blockade-runners. There was not much room for cargo in these slim, shallow craft. At best their visits were irregular and precarious, and it followed that every pair of high-heeled slippers meant one less pair of soldier's boots, every bit of lace one less

blanket, every vanity whatever one less necessity for the want of which the soldiers were suffering. So, even for such luxuries as coffee, sugar, wheat flour, shoes, stockings, clothing generally, one found or made at home something that would serve as a substitute. And if one ventured to wear a pair of commercially manufactured gloves, for example, "Oh, you've run the blockade," was the phrase in which the fact was noted. There was an implication in it one did not wholly like to hear.

But Celia had "run the blockade" in person, and it could be forgiven to her — or if not it was out of clear envy — that her shoes were of kid and not of canvas tacked upon wooden soles, that she wore white silk stockings, and that all together she looked as fluffy and fresh as any of her sisters had looked a year ago.

She had dressed to-night in the same pink gown she had worn at Mr. Odell's dinner in Liverpool. "I keep getting thinner and thinner," she observed, looking critically at her bare shoulders. "If it goes on much longer, I'll have to wear dresses clear up to my chin."

"You look all the better for a bone or two," said her mother. "You look lovely. I feel like kissing you — myself."

"Mother!"

She intended, it seemed, to make a stately

exit, but thought better of it, and coming over to the bed laid both her hands on Mrs. Townley's shoulders. "You're well," she said. "You can't impose on me another minute. I'm going to make you come down and see him yourself."

She did not carry out her threat, however. Half-past seven saw Mrs. Townley already settled for the night and Celia in the sitting-room, with a bit of sewing to occupy her hands, waiting for Martin. It was another ugly night, much such a night as the one through which his brother had come to see her; but now it seemed to her that the rattle of wind and rain without served only to make the half-lit room more cheerful.

She was so happy in anticipating his coming that she had taken it for granted that his mood would be the same as hers, that the torturing strain of his late anxieties and fears would by now have relaxed as her own had done. And, curiously, she was not disappointed.

For the first few minutes, indeed, after they had drawn close to the fire, he had seemed to her haggard, grave, preoccupied, but presently he threw off this mood as he had thrown off the great wet ulster which had enveloped him when he came in out of the storm. He settled back more easily in his chair, and the deep, drawn lines in his face slackened.

She echoed the movement with one of her own, hitched her low chair a little nearer the fire and a very little nearer his, leaned forward in it, resting her elbows on her knees, her chin in her hands, and drew a little sigh of contentment. "There," she said.

With that their talk began to flow easily, drifting back to old times, to the old days on the *Southern Cross*. From there Celia led it back further, into his stormy boyhood, interspersing now and then, when the contrast struck her forcibly, tales of her own childish experiences, but always leading it back again to himself, demanding with an eagerness hard for him to understand more of his stories of the sea. She seemed to be following out a train of thoughts of her own, to which he had not the clew.

"And you did that!" she interrupted in the middle of one of his narrations. "But you knew it was wrong. You knew it might wreck the ship."

"That wasn't my affair. I was a common sailor. He was the officer of the watch."

"But you had a right to have common-sense. Why didn't you go to the captain and tell him — "

He laughed rather grimly. "I never was flogged myself," he said, "but I've seen a man given a taste of the rope for less than that."

"Do they whip men?" she asked, wide-eyed.

"Not often, now."

"What different worlds we've lived in," she said thoughtfully after a little silence. "I've never minded any one, really, in all my life, or not since I was a little girl. Mother would tell me she thought it best, perhaps, and she'd always tell me why, and I'd do what she wanted me to do because I liked to please her. Nobody ever *ordered* me — but Harper." Her laugh told well enough what sort of obedience those orders had had. "But you, you used to do things just because people said to do them."

"I do yet," he corrected. "Most of us have to obey somebody all our lives. It may not be the boatswain, but whether it's he or the captain or the owners, it comes to the same thing."

"But the owner, when you were captain, was your own father."

"Oh, we're father and son. But we're owner and captain, too. And the first doesn't make any difference about the second."

That, too, made her thoughtfully silent for a little. She roused herself with a different subject.

"Martin," she asked, "do you think we ought to go away, mother and I?"

He had already thought that out, and he had an answer for her, but he took a moment as if

in consideration, just to enjoy the sound of his name on her lips. It was the first time she had used it. Winthrop had been "Mr. Winthrop" from the first; that had been necessary to distinguish him from his father. But Martin she had always, half playfully, called "Captain," when she used any form of address at all.

"Yes, I think you ought," he answered at last.

"We don't want to. We'll do it if it's best, of course, but — you wouldn't want to run away yourself, would you, with people talking as they talk about us? Not until you'd shown them they were wrong."

He used the same argument that the commandant had called up to clinch the matter.

"You know Winthrop as well as I do — better, I suppose. Aren't you afraid he may come back if you stay here? He won't know, of course, how close they were on his heels, nor that his visit involved you at all. If he did come back, it's hardly possible that he could get off again. You want to think what it would mean to you, if —"

She looked at him quickly, no less puzzled by the words than by the tone in which they were spoken.

They had heard no approaching steps outside, and were both a little startled by a quick, ner-

vous little rat-tat on the door. She opened it, he standing close beside her.

"Oh!" she said, peering out into the dark. "Mr. Odell! Come in."

With all her training, with the Southern tradition of unquestioning hospitality she had always had about her, she could not manage to get into her tone the warmth of genuine invitation. "You must be dreadfully wet," she went on, doing a little better. "How good of you it was to come on such a night!"

"It is a bit nasty," he said, as Martin helped him out of his mackintosh.

"So you're here," he went on, addressing Martin, when they were all seated. "I thought you always tried to sleep for about three days before you started out."

"I've still time for sleep enough," the captain answered.

"How would you like that sort of life, Miss Townley? I don't see how men live at it at all. I hope your mother is quite well," he concluded.

Celia informed him in brief of her mother's condition, and prophesied how sorry she would be to have missed his call.

"I am much concerned to hear she's ill," he said. "I trust it's not serious. Nothing has happened, no bad news from the front, or anything of that sort, to bring on the attack?"

"No," Celia told him. She was overtired, that was all.

With both the young people wondering why he had come, and wishing that he would go, it was really no wonder that Mr. Odell's talk did not prosper. They did not mean to be rude to him, indeed it was evident that they were trying their best not to be, but it was up-hill work. His social perceptions were as quick as those which stood him in such good stead in a commercial way, and he was perfectly aware that in his present position he was an unpleasant interruption; that, whatever had been the thread of their talk it would not be taken up again till he was gone. That alone, though it is a common enough experience, is always irritating, but it was only half the trouble with Mr. Odell. If he was an interruption to Martin, Martin was an obstacle to him. In Martin's presence his errand to the Townleys' house was a little difficult to broach.

He was in the habit of finding situations easy to manage, and the evident impossibility of managing this one put him out of temper.

"You may remember, Martin, my speaking of having seen Captain Dearborn a prisoner here on his way to Andersonville. Well, I learned to-day that he and that sailor who was with him are here in the city jail at Wilmington. It seems

that there was something irregular about their exchange, — their former exchange, I mean!"

He had the satisfaction of seeing that he had stung Martin out of his revery at last.

"What do you mean by irregularity about his exchange? Was there any exchange at all?"

"I heard very indirectly about it. I really don't know any more than that."

Martin asked no more questions, but sat frowning heavily over the news; and Celia, who chose to ask the questions that occurred to her of him on another occasion, was silent, too.

So again it was Mr. Odell who launched a new topic, but this time it was in a different manner, the manner of one who knows exactly what he is going to do. He had taken the bull by the horns. He was coming to the point.

"I'm afraid a good many of us have our romantic moments, Miss Townley. Martin, here, when I told him that Captain Dearborn was a prisoner, wanted to 'cut him out and carry him off to Nassau.' And this escapade of Winthrop's, for I suppose, of course, it was Winthrop, was as madly romantic as possible. I've even heard that, not content with paying Martin a visit, he came to see you, also."

She colored vividly and drew herself up a little straighter, but made no reply, although his pause had invited it.

"Miss Celia," he said, "I don't want to pry into your affairs or into Martin's, here, or into Winthrop's, wherever he may be. I'm sure there is a great deal more to that story than I know, but I'm not concerned in it, except in so far as it may affect me personally, or as it may affect our business here, Mr. Carver's and mine. But I hear a good deal, one way and another, about town, and I've heard a good deal in the last day or two to make me rather anxious as to the part you may have had in this adventure. I only hear what people think — I don't know how much or how little of it may be true. But I came to-night for one thing, — to ask if you'd thought of going away, by way of Nassau, I mean."

"Why do you want us to go away, Mr. Odell?" she asked.

"It's on your own account, of course. I thought possibly —"

Martin was listening to something, to some sound out of doors, apparently, which it puzzled him to account for, and Mr. Odell, rather glad of the diversion, stopped to listen, too. In a lull between two great gusts of wind they heard it plainly.

A human noise is almost always perfectly distinguishable from any other sort. There is almost always, if it be repeated, a more or less obvious

rhythm about it. But this sound, like a patrol of unsteady feet, lacked that quality. It was coming nearer now. The feet, if they were human feet, were coming up the steps. There was a thud against the door, and then something like, but, because of this same lack of rhythm, strangely unlike, the knock of a hand on the panels.

Martin was at the door before the others had fairly risen from their chairs. He turned the knob, but it moved stiffly. The man, or whatever it was on the other side, was holding it. And as he opened the door into the room, the man, somehow, came in with it.

Then, in a flash, Martin's right arm shot around him, and lifted him bodily, clear of the path of the door, which his left hand in the same inappreciable period of time thrust to and locked. At the first grip of his arm the man had begun to struggle, but until the lock was shot home Martin held him with his one arm. Then with both arms, that could be gentle because they were so strong, he held him still.

"Winthrop, old man, don't you know me?" he said.

"'Winthrop, old man, don't you know me?'"

CHAPTER XIII

"We must be quick," said Celia, breathlessly. "They may have seen him come in. We must do something quickly."

But what? There was a silence long enough to be measured by minutes, after Martin had carried him, quite inert after his momentary struggle, to the sofa and laid him there. Martin sat on the edge of it, one hand on his shoulder, the other thrust beneath the bosom of his wet flannel shirt. Celia stood close beside, and Mr. Odell a little farther off, holding by the back of a chair and swaying thoughtfully to and fro.

How in the name of wonder he came to be there, how in his condition he had come through the picket line, had wandered unnoticed through the streets, had found this house — these questions could wait; indeed, they never really knew. But it was another question altogether which held them silent, which mocked their efforts to answer it, yet seemed with every tick of the loud-voiced clock to cry out more importunately for the answer.

Mr. Odell was the first to try.

It was one of the ironies of chance that he should be there. His making this evening visit, his trying to induce Mrs. Townley and her daughter to leave the city, had something indeed to justify them. He had heard the talk of the town; he had, to a certain extent, shared the town's suspicions. But his motive had been a selfish one, a small one, even as small motives go. He had seen that by staying longer in the city these two women might easily impair the efficiency of his best asset, Captain Martin Carver. Things would run more smoothly if they were away, whether there were any truth in the town talk or not. So, on this night, at this hour, he had come to this house. So he had stepped out of a tolerably comfortable frying-pan into a veritable glowing, fiery furnace. But the fire seemed to be just what Mr. Odell's rather thickly crusted soul needed.

"Would it be possible," he asked, "to put him into a boat and row him down the river and out to one of the cruisers? Could we do it together? I've not handled a scull for a good many years, but I'd do what I could."

Both Celia and Martin felt a little surprise — afterward. There was no room for it now, nor for gratitude, for anything but the struggle with the Question.

"We couldn't do it," said Martin, after a

moment. "The sea that's running outside to-night would swamp any of these little river boats — especially with his dead weight in it. If he were himself we could try it. We could hide in Walden Creek and wait our chance to get out. But one more night in the swamp would kill him, I think."

"He's very ill, isn't he?" Celia asked.

"He's burning up with fever. It's just from exhaustion and starvation, most likely. It would only take two or three days to put him on his feet, temporarily." Then, to Mr. Odell, "We must find some place here in the city where we can hide him for as long as that."

"We'll keep him here, of course," said Celia.

"How's your place?" demanded Martin of the older man.

"The warehouse," he answered. "Why not?"

"Hold on. Didn't you say last night you'd hired a night watchman?"

"There's no reason why he can't be kept here," Celia said quickly, without waiting for his affirmative nod. "Oh, there are ordinary reasons, of course. But there is nothing to make it impossible. There are just ourselves here. The servant isn't here at night. And they won't search the house for him unless some one saw him

come in. Besides, you couldn't take him through the streets, anywhere, as he is now."

"Your mother — " began Martin, doubtfully.

"Her *life* isn't in danger. She may be longer getting well, that's all."

Hitherto, all of them — she, like the two men — had spoken in a manner curiously matter-of-fact; a little more rapidly with rather more condensation, it is true, than was perfectly natural, but in no other way showing that they realized the hideous alternative of failure. But the silence of a few seconds which followed Celia's last words was too much for her nerves. "Oh, do be quick, be quick!" Her voice broke in a sob that had a hysterical echo of a laugh in it.

"Mr. Odell," said Martin, "I'm glad you're willing to help us. We shall need it. I think I have the plan. I shall be taken sick, here, now. In the morning you'll go to the *Caroline* and tell them so. Tell the steward to bring me my medicine case." Then he turned to Celia. "Is there a bed I can put him into?"

"I'll get it ready," she said, and went swiftly out of the room and up the stairs.

Mr. Odell seemed a little uneasy. "Won't it cause comment if it gets generally known you're here?"

"All the better. That's just what will make

it possible to keep him here — and to get him off, too, perhaps. And if anybody has to see me, they can, for a day or two. We could chance it, I think."

"Perhaps you're right. But here's another thing. Won't they insist, Mr. White and the others, I mean, on sending a doctor to see you, if they know you're really ill? I could get medicines — I've got no end of 'em at the warehouse."

"They won't insist," said Martin. "They'll obey orders. And I've got to be sick. I've got to be as near as possible exactly as sick as he is."

"Yes — yes, you're quite right. Can I help you in getting him to bed?"

"No, I can do it alone. You'd better go back now. If he was seen coming here, and if the guard does come to arrest him in a few minutes now, there's no good in your being here. But you'll come again to-morrow?"

"Whenever you want me. Good night."

"Good night."

An instant later Celia came down the stairs. "Everything is ready for him. Shall I go ahead with the candle?" The moment of action, the doing of something she had been explicitly told to do, had brought her under control again. She spoke as steadily as ever.

"Good," said Martin. He went to the sofa, laid his hands on Winthrop's uneasy body, and gently began to raise him. He roused a little out of his feverish sleep, then suddenly again began struggling fiercely to get free from the arms that held him.

"You're all right, old man. Lie still." Somehow the low voice, reassuring but peremptory, carried something of its meaning to the sick man's wits, errant though they were. He sank back again quietly enough, and Martin, gathering him in his arms, followed Celia up the creaking stairs.

She brought him everything he asked for and went away, leaving him to get Winthrop to bed, but when half an hour later he opened the door, he found her sitting at the head of the stairs.

She rose and came softly toward the door. "I've been listening," she whispered. "Do you think they'll come to-night to take him?"

"We're safe so far," he answered, also in a whisper. "If any one had seen him come to the house, they'd have been here before this looking for him."

"Martin, you'll tell me what you really think, won't you? Is there any chance, any chance at all to save him?"

"I think so — I think a fairly good one. I've a sort of a plan, the main points of one, that

isn't hopeless by any means. It will be hard, it'll demand a good deal of all of us, — of him, and you, and your mother. If we all do our parts right, it may work. But it won't do to look so far ahead as that. We've got to leave the outcome of it to — to the One that decides if any of our plans shall work."

"I know," she answered, "and I'll try. I'll do exactly what you tell me to. What shall I tell mother?"

"Has she heard at all what's gone on to-night?"

"No. Her room's downstairs, but at the end of the passage, — the other end of the house from the living room."

"You'd better tell me the plan of the house, I think. It may be useful."

She made it as clear as she could without a diagram.

"Then there's only this one room upstairs?" he asked, when she had finished. "Where does this other door lead?"

"It's just a garret. And you can get into it through the closet in your room, too."

"That's as good as possible. Do you store anything in it?"

"Yes, our trunks and things. Why?"

"I was thinking of what you're to tell your mother. If you were to occupy yourself up here for a day or two, in the attic, we might be able

to keep her in the dark as to any one else's being upstairs. But she might hear something you couldn't explain. No, we'd better not run that risk. Could you say that I've been sick — "

"She'd insist on coming to take care of you, if she was strong enough to climb the stairs. I couldn't keep her away."

"Then you'll have to tell her that I'm pretending to be sick, — that people think I am, but I'm not at all!"

"But she'll want to know why."

"Tell her it's a secret of mine. Tell her that you know, and that Mr. Odell knows, and that you'll tell her, if she wants to know. I think I'd tell her all that the first thing in the morning."

"Yes," she said. "I think that's exactly right. And — are there any further orders, Captain?"

"Nothing, except to sleep as hard as you can till morning. Unless — " He paused a little awkwardly. She waited, and after a little he went on with an obvious effort: "He's asleep, but perhaps you'd like to go in, for a minute or two, just to see that he's quite comfortable — "

He could not see her face clearly, but had an idea that she looked at him curiously before she answered.

"I don't think I'll go in to-night," she said. "I'm going to obey orders and go to sleep. You told me once not to be afraid. Do you remem-

ber? On the *Southern Cross* when the storm was coming? But you won't have to tell me again."

His eyes followed her down the stairs, then he went softly back into the sick-room, and drawing the easy-chair close beside the bed, settled down for the long night watch.

But it did not seem long to him. Over and over again he studied his plan, working out its details, testing it with every exigency he could think of. It was horribly insecure, and once or twice in the night he abandoned it altogether in the search for another where the chances of failure would not be so many; but there seemed to be no other, and he returned to it. He reckoned with all the persons who, consciously or not, must play a part in it, — the endurance of this one, the courage of that, the loyalty of another. Well, humanly speaking, perhaps there was an even chance, or a little less, that they might succeed.

A little after two o'clock in the morning, the hour when the barometer is lowest, when all the world turns restlessly in its sleep, when those holding death at arm's end are oftenest overcome, Winthrop began to stir more uneasily, and his low, feverish muttering began to take the form of intelligible words. They were only words; there was nothing coherent about them, but there was a suggestion of a meaning — if one

could but find it — which drew Martin's thoughts away from the plan, that held his eyes eagerly on the sick man's face, that sometimes held his breath suspended from one word to another. There was but a shred or two in all the tangle, but in these he seemed to find a hope, an old hope of his, long held and only just relinquished.

The sick man soon became quiet again, but Martin's thoughts did not go back to the plan. He let himself forget it, forget the perils the next few days must bring them all, as he sat there till the dawn came in at the windows nursing that just dead hope of his back to life.

Before full day, as he sat watching it break, a movement in the bed behind him made him turn quickly; it was feeble, but it had purpose in it.

"Well, how do you feel after your night's sleep?" he asked.

"Martin — what — where am I?"

"Never mind about that. You're all right. Do you want a drink and a bite to eat?"

He held him up in bed and let him drink half a glass of water; then, with more success than his inexperience would have led one to expect, he fed him with that most unmanageable of viands — a raw egg.

"I don't see how you come to be here," said

the sick man, after it was over. "I don't understand it at all."

"How should you when you don't know where you are?"

The answer seemed to satisfy him for a moment; then his memory taking a stronger hold than before, he made an effort to rouse himself.

"Martin," he said, "there is something I must tell you. — I must talk to you. It's what I went to the *Caroline* for."

Whatever the next words were to be, however much they might mean to Martin, they must not be said now. "There's no hurry about it. I'm not going away. You're not to talk or think for another twenty-four hours. After that as much as you like. But for twenty-four hours, remember, not a word to me or to any one else."

He tried to protest, but already his exertion had wearied him, and before many minutes he was again asleep.

While it was still early, before he expected any sound whatever in the house, he heard Celia coming up the stairs. In the passage he met her, bright-eyed, triumphant.

"I've told mother," she said, "and mother says she's willing to trust you with as many secrets as you please. How's Winthrop? Did he have a good night?"

He nodded. "As good as possible."

"So everything's gone exactly right so far. And now I'm going to get your breakfast before Jennie comes. She's the cook, you know."

"I'm hungry enough to eat it, but I guess we'd better wait for her. Let her get it ready and bring it up herself."

"Let her see him?"

"But not me. I'll be in the garret." Her look spoke the utmost surprise, so he explained. "She's probably curious. If she suspects there's a mystery she'll do all she can to make it out. She's likely to be questioned if it's true that I'm here. If she has brought my meals up three times a day, and has seen Winthrop really sick, she'll answer questions perfectly naturally."

"But she's probably seen you; the darkies are so interested in the blockade-runners. Are you going to trust the resemblance? It seems dreadful," she went on, at his affirmative nod; "you don't look alike, not in the least."

"Didn't we when you didn't know us so well? We do to strangers, as a rule."

"He looks a little like you, perhaps," she admitted, "but you don't look a bit like him."

"It has worked once," he said thoughtfully, very gravely. "People mistook him for me then. They'll expect me to look different without my beard, and after a touch of fever —"

"They!" She looked at him, wide-eyed. "Is

that your plan to get him off! Martin — won't they know him the moment he steps out of the door?"

"It's our only chance. He won't be in shape to take to the swamps for weeks. We can't keep this up for more than two or three days. But it isn't desperate. And we'll have to believe in it ourselves. A good deal will depend on how we do our part in it."

For a moment the idea terrified her; the thought that during the very moments when his life hung in the balance they must be steady of nerve, nonchalant, that by a glance or a start they themselves might betray him, was almost unendurable. Her lips were trembling when she asked: —

"Martin, can we do it? Do you think we can do it?"

"Yes," he said. "When the time comes you'll be able to do it."

She drew a long breath. "Well," she said, "I can at least begin by being brave with the cook. I'll tell her when she comes."

It was a hard test, and it needed all her courage to carry it through. Jennie was an old servant in the family, and she had her privileges, the chief of which was that of unlimited comment. Celia resisted the impulse to check her, resisted it further than she would have done had she

not had a hard part to play; but it grew harder every moment, and when at last the woman remarked that Captain Carver looked as if he'd never had a sick day all his life, she felt her heart sink, and found herself a trifle giddy. It seemed like a deliberate betrayal. With a very little less self-control, with a grain less faith in Martin, she would have taken the tray from the woman's hands and carried it up herself.

But the experiment was worth all it cost her, for the sight of the servant's face as she came down the stairs five minutes later was convincing. "He's mighty sick, that's a fact," was her comment. "But I thought he was looking kind of peaked last time I saw him."

It was not the severest test the resemblance must be put to, but, as far as it went, it was encouraging.

A little later in the morning, after Mr. Odell had made his visit, Celia mounted the stairs, with a pair of blankets over her arm. She opened the right-hand door into the little garret, and it was here that Martin found her.

"How did you know it wasn't Jennie?" she asked severely as he tiptoed into the room. He smiled, and with that for answer she went on. "Winthrop's asleep, isn't he? I'm going to make some sort of a place for you to sleep yourself. You must have nearly frozen last night."

Besides the blankets she contrived to get together from here and there a large enough aggregate of soft things to make a very tolerable bed. Together they disposed them with great pretension on her part to a highly scientific arrangement, in a corner near the closet door which communicated with the room where Winthrop lay asleep.

The necessity for almost perfect silence, the talk in whispers, the unusual surroundings and occupation, made it all seem a sort of play. "It's like playing house," she said. "I feel about ten years old, don't you? And isn't it fun?"

He was used to sudden changes in her, but now the sudden transformation in her face from glee to something little short of horror startled him.

"Did you hear something?" he asked.

"No — no. I just remembered what it all means. I'd forgotten. Oh, how could I forget, even for a minute!"

"I'm glad you could. The people who can forget when there's nothing to be gained by remembering can go just so much farther and can stand just so much more than those who can't. You'll do your part all the better when the time comes."

"Perhaps so," she said. But she was serious

now. The mood of childhood was gone. "Martin," she said, seating herself on a box and motioning him to another near by, "mother and I have decided to go away. We decided this morning. You think it's right, don't you?"

"I hoped you would; I've thought about it a good deal. Do you think you could get ready to go soon? On the *Caroline* on Monday?"

"Why, Monday's only the day after to-morrow. Oh, do you mean for us to go when you take him? Will it help your plan? Yes, we can go, of course."

"That's the last difficulty," he said, with evident relief, "the last that we're concerned with, I mean. Would you like to hear the plan?"

"Oh, please!" she said. "I hoped you'd tell me."

It was essentially what he had thought out the night before. With Mr. Odell's help he had filled in some details, and now he knew he could count on Celia and her mother to go with them it was complete. He began at the beginning.

"The *Caroline* was to have sailed Sunday, — to-morrow, — but Mr. Odell has told them to wait over one day more on account of my being sick. That gives Winthrop another day to get better, and it means that the *Caroline* will have to wait

nearly an hour later at Smithville for the moon to set. That takes it till after midnight. You know we usually drop down the river in the afternoon, and wait for dark off Smithville.

"Mr. White is to command this trip — or he expects to — and we'll set half-past three as the hour for leaving here, but you'll keep him waiting. You won't leave the house here till half-past four or five. There'll be less light then, and you'll be sure they'll be ready to turn the wheels the minute you get aboard. Mr. Odell will hire a closed hack and when the time comes, you and your mother and he and Winthrop will walk out to it and drive to the *Caroline*. I don't think there'll be the least danger as you go through the streets. The risk will be when you get to the *Caroline*."

"Yes," she said unsteadily, "that will be dreadful."

"We've a good deal in our favor, though. None of them have seen him before, not his face at least. They'll be expecting me, and won't have any idea for a minute of seeing any one else. He'll be in my clothes, he'll have on my overcoat with the collar turned up, and it's wide enough to pretty well hide his face. Mr. Odell will take his arm and walk him straight to my cabin. It won't take three minutes all together from the time you get out of the hack."

"Suppose they try to make him talk; suppose somebody asks him a question."

"They'll be busy, and in a hurry — the officers will — to get past Reeves' Point by what's left of the daylight. The steward's the man to look out for. He'll probably come up to help, and if he does, you'll have to find something on the spur of the moment to divert him. It's only what he might do in a moment of surprise that would be dangerous. He might exclaim and attract some one else's attention. If worst should come to worst, I think you could throw yourself, or me rather, on his mercy. He's perfectly loyal."

His use of the word struck her oddly. "Loyalty" in the South meant loyalty to the Cause. She saw in a moment that he meant by it simply personally devoted to his commander. That gave her something to think about afterward, but now her attention came quickly back to the unfinished story. Martin had stopped as though there were nothing more to tell.

"What next?" she asked.

"Oh, after that it's simple. Mr. Odell stays in my state-room with Winthrop, and sees that nobody else gets in. He's going through to Nassau with you. The *Caroline* will drop down to Smithville, wait for the moon to set, and then run the blockade."

"But you!" she demanded. "Martin,—" in quick alarm,—"what will you do? They'll capture you instead."

"Not if I can help it. I'm going to escape. I shall wait for dark and then slip off. There'll be a boat hidden, two boats in fact, in different places so that I can have my choice. With luck, I'll get down to Smithville before you start out. In that case, I'll get aboard and go out with you."

"You mustn't let them go without you. We won't go till you're safe on board."

"It won't do to wait," he said, with gentle finality. "If I'm not there, it's all the more reason to hurry away. But I can take care of myself. And even if they do catch me, they'll soon find they have the wrong man. They wouldn't let me off on that account of course, but they wouldn't treat me—as they'd treat him."

"Don't," she shuddered. "But are you sure they wouldn't, Martin? Are you sure?"

"Quite sure," he said.

Presently, with a manifest exercise of her self-command, she changed the direction of this talk. "You ought to be asleep," she said. "You must save up, too. If you'll go to sleep now, I'll watch, and if anything happens will wake you."

"That won't be necessary. I told him the last time he was awake that if he didn't see me I'd be in the next room, and that he wasn't to call out."

"Is he — Does he understand? Have you talked with him?"

"He wanted to talk," said Martin, very slowly. "He said there was something he must tell me. But I wouldn't let him, of course. I said he must wait till to-morrow."

The note of eagerness — of more than that, of fear, almost — in her voice as she had asked the question had caught his ear and drawn his eyes to her face; but, bidden by an instinct which told him that she would not have him read what was written there, he lowered them again, instantly. He did not look at her as he made his answer, nor during the moment of silence that followed it, nor she at him, but both knew that what they had put off last evening for their stolen hour had become peremptory.

"Perhaps this isn't the time to give explanations, nor to ask for them," he said at last, "but, Celia — I told you the other day that I thought I understood. It seemed that there was only one way to understand it. He had come into the city to see you, and your brother had helped him, and — I took it just as the commandant did. And that seemed to help me to understand

what — what had been between us. I thought you must have looked at things as I knew Winthrop did, that it seemed to you that I had been disloyal to him, that I'd sided with father against him, and perhaps for my own advantage. And I wanted to make you see that I hadn't. I thought I could. But I'm not sure now that I wasn't wrong altogether. Winthrop hasn't talked to me, but in his dreams last night he talked, and I listened to what he said. Celia, are you willing to tell me? Are you and he — "

He could not say the word, but she understood without it, and answered, not very steadily, "No, we're not engaged to each other. And we won't be, ever. He — he understands."

It was a moment before he asked the next question.

"And I am wrong about the other, too?"

"Yes."

"Then I haven't found the reason. It means — more than anything else to me to find it. Won't I ever know, Celia? Can't you tell me?"

He looked up at her as he asked the question, and saw in her face what he had seen there months ago when she had said good-by to him, that cold, gray morning aboard the *Caroline*, her eyes bright with tears, telling him so much and not ashamed to tell, but still denying.

"Not to-day," she pleaded; "not any more

to-day. Can't it be like last night, like this morning, for a little longer? We haven't any right to — ourselves, now. And maybe some day everything will come right."

Though they agreed to try it, it seemed almost beyond possibility that they could go back to the relation of yesterday; and both were surprised to find it easy, to find themselves back on the same intimate yet entirely practical terms as before, and the little interlude not forgotten, but laid away until they should have a "right to themselves" again.

The next forty-eight hours brought no great events, but a multitude of small affairs. Martin's share of them was the slightest, for, beyond taking care of Winthrop, there was nothing he could venture to do; but Celia, besides the attention her mother needed, had to make all the preparations for their unexpected departure. She had Jennie to help her, indeed, but Jennie was not too effective at best, and in her bewilderment and grief over their going away still less so.

As for Mr. Odell, he was running back and forth on one errand or another all the while. It is not likely that he was as much surprised to find himself in this rôle as they were. Whether he reasoned that the only thing left for him to do, the only chance for saving the "business," was to get them all off safely, or whether he

shared their feelings more nearly, it came to precisely the same thing. He was eager, resourceful, invaluable.

By Sunday morning, it was evident, as it had not been before, that Winthrop would be ready, after another day's recruiting, to make the attempt. He waked after a normal night's sleep, stretched and sat up in bed, and demanded to be told where he was and how he came to be there. It was rather a severe test of his newly recovered strength to be told that he was lying, as it were, in the open hand of Death, and that in a little more than twenty-four hours he must make an attempt to walk out between the fingers. He did not, of course, guess the worst of it, the general knowledge through the town of the striking resemblance the spy had borne to Captain Carver, nor the suspicion, partly allayed, but smouldering and ready to flare up at a breath, against the Townleys; and Martin took care that he should not guess. He entered into the plan with all his old-time *verve* and gay courage, and they all felt that if these qualities could carry him through, he would not fail in his part.

But if they could reckon him every hour less an invalid and more a colaborer, with Mrs. Townley, contrary to their expectations, the case was reversed. Physically she seemed well

enough. She had not worried, either, over "Martin's mystery," had shown no curiosity about it, had seemed often to forget completely that he was in the house. She had assented readily enough to the plan for going away, had seemed neither surprised nor reluctant when told how soon it was to be. But that this apparent calmness came from her failure to comprehend the smallest part of the situation, rather than from a deliberate acceptance of it, was made evident by her moments of distress and anxiety over the smallest and most trivial matters of the household routine. They had put off, almost from hour to hour, telling her that their escort to the *Caroline* would be Winthrop instead of Martin, and at last they definitely decided to leave it until the very last moment, hoping that the danger might be over before she could fairly realize how great it had been. All together, by tea-time, Sunday, her condition seemed to be the thing most likely to set at naught their calculations.

Even the news Mr. Odell brought with him in the evening, important though it was, hardly held their minds for more than the few minutes which he sat on Martin's bed in the garret — for Winthrop was asleep — and told them what he knew of it.

"I've sniffed something in the wind for several days," he said, "some military expedition or

other. It's all been kept very quiet. All I know now is that it's on for to-morrow night. I suspect it's to be an affair of boats. They're impressing all the boats they can find, at any rate. They nearly got the two I've hidden for you to get off in. But as they didn't, I don't see that they'll trouble us."

"No, it's good news so far as it goes," said Martin. "The more they have to think about to-morrow, the less they're likely to think about us."

"It may complicate things for you a bit, that's all. You may find more company than you want on the river."

"No," said Martin, easily. "I don't think they'll trouble me a bit."

"And there's no part of the plan you want changed? This is our last chance to talk over anything in advance. I shan't come to the house till it's time to start, till about four o'clock."

"No, there's nothing to change. The only thing now is for everybody to get a good night's sleep."

They shook hands all around, for Celia had been a silent party to the colloquy, and so ended the last "council."

The intolerable part of that memorable Monday, the part that wore Winthrop into a fever

again, that even told severely upon Martin's endurance, was between ten o'clock that morning, when they realized that there was nothing to do now but wait, and half-past three in the afternoon.

At the latter hour, Winthrop, who for the last hour had been stretched out beside Martin on the bed, holding himself still and pretending to rest, sat up with a jerk.

"I can't stand this any longer," he said. "Are you asleep?"

"No."

"I think I'll pack that little bag of yours."

"It's done already."

"Confound it! Why couldn't you leave something for me to amuse myself with? What's Celia doing, do you know?"

"She's pretending to pack, too, I think. She was going to get her mother to help her, to keep her entertained. I wonder if she's told her yet."

"She'll have to pretty soon. Mr. Odell will be here in a few minutes."

"Not for half an hour yet."

He had not more than got the words out before they heard footsteps and a knock at the front door.

"That's not he," said Martin, "and it's more than one. It's two women."

The sound of their voices, a moment later, confirmed his guess, but who the two could be was a puzzle. They were still there when Mr. Odell came, half an hour later, and then they learned that the callers were Mrs. Sherwin and Dolly, who had come to say good-by.

"It ought to be a good thing, too," Mr. Odell added. "It ought to stiffen Mrs. Townley up a bit. But I wish they'd go now. I've got some more news for you. Captain Dearborn and that sailor of his broke jail last night, and apparently have got off. There's no end of a row about it all over town and down the river. I suppose they're sure to be taken, but I hope not. It won't make it any easier for you, though" (this to Martin) — "the hullabaloo after them."

There was another half an hour's wait before they heard the last farewell and the click of the door as it shut behind the visitors.

Winthrop sprang up, and began putting on Martin's ulster.

"Give them five minutes more," said Martin. "She may not have told her mother yet."

Mr. Odell took out his watch, and told off the half minutes as they went by. And at last he put it back in his pocket and rose. "Well, my lad," he said, "it's time we were off."

There fell then a little moment of silence, before the brothers parted. Whether the part-

ing was to be for hours, for years, forever, they could not know. They gripped hands tight.

"I won't forget the stoop," Winthrop said, "nor that I have brown eyes. God bless you, old man! Good-by."

Martin heard them down the stairs. Then through the closet he stepped into his garret and lay down on his bed. He had not realized that he was not to have another word with Celia. It was safest so, no doubt, and he stiffened himself against the feeling of despondency that came over him.

And then he heard her step on the stairs.

"I've only a minute," she whispered as she closed the garret door behind her. "I mustn't leave mother."

"You told her?"

"She didn't seem frightened — but, Martin, she didn't seem to understand. Do you think she'll break down before it's over?"

"It's nearly over now. You'll be safe in fifteen minutes."

"But you! Martin, you mustn't let them take you. Did you know about Captain Dearborn? You'll — Good-by, Martin."

He stood bending a little, his hands locked together before him.

"Good-by," he said. "If I don't — "

The locked hands came apart, and he stretched

his arms out towards her. "Celia, if I don't come —"

With a little gasp she sprang between them, and with her own drew herself close, closer to him. "Good-by," she said again, and, opening the door, went swiftly down the stairs. He locked it after her, and the other as well, and then lay down again. He heard the front door open, and then, after what seemed a long time, the carriage drove off.

PART V

THE AWAKENING

CHAPTER XIV

With cheeks still burning after that swift embrace, Celia entered the room below. Her heart was beating fast, but very steadily, and she was aware somehow of an unusual keenness in all her faculties, of a more perfect self-command, of a complete self-confidence. With a glance about the room she noted her mother talking cheerfully — ominously cheerfully — to Winthrop, who was sitting beside her on the sofa; Jennie in a corner between two large portmanteaux which she was to take out to the carriage, ready to burst into tears when the moment of departure should actually have arrived; Mr. Odell at the door, his hand already, on the latch, making manifest his impatience to be gone.

"I'm sorry I've kept you waiting," she said, with an apologetic little smile, "but I'm quite ready now."

He smiled, too, but nothing but his lips had any part in it. "You ready, Captain?" he asked.

"Quite," Winthrop answered, "and it's high time we were off, too."

Mr. Odell pulled open the door; Jennie with a loud sniff lifted the two heavy travelling bags, but stood still, waiting for the others to pass; and Winthrop sprang up to assist Mrs. Townley to rise.

"Don't forget that you're an invalid, Captain Carver," said Celia, crossing over to them. "Come, mother." She led her across to the open door, and Winthrop, profiting by the reminder, sank back again on the sofa.

The carriage had been waiting a quarter of an hour or more, and without the special interest and curiosity which attached to the house before which it waited, it would have drawn together, no doubt, a little knot of the idly inquisitive to watch the departure. As it was, when the door opened there were, perhaps, a dozen persons of all ages and all conditions but the best, who, more or less frankly, were watching to see who would come out of it.

Though the situation was just as she had foreseen it, Celia found it harder to face than she had expected it would be, harder to dismiss from her mind the possibility that they would know him the moment he stepped outside the door, or to keep from guessing who among the little group out there would be first to give the alarm. One of them was a soldier; perhaps it was by the commandant's express

orders that he was keeping watch. All that went through her thoughts simultaneously in a single flash, and as quickly it was gone again, but she held her mother's arm more firmly than before as they took the next step.

If she had not done so, Mrs. Townley would have fallen, for upon her the effect of the sight was unexpected even to them, and most alarming. She went perfectly white, faltered, and clutched aimlessly for support.

"Celia," she cried, and but that no voice came with the words, only an agonized whisper, they must have reached the ears of those who were hanging over the low fence, "Celia, they'll see him! They'll know him!"

"Jennie, go ahead with the bags, please," the girl said steadily. They stepped back a pace to give her room to get by. "Mother," Celia continued, "all we have to do is exactly what Martin told us to do. He wants us to go out to the carriage. Mr. Odell, will you help us?"

Leaning heavily on the two arms which now held her, Mrs. Townley allowed herself to be led out to the carriage. There was no demonstration against them whatever, save in a few unfriendly comments, and these, as far as she was concerned, seemed to fall on deaf ears. As soon as she was seated Mr. Odell went back

for Winthrop. Jennie, meanwhile, had stowed the two portmanteaux on the box beside the driver, and was now standing ankle deep in the mud of the unpaved road, taking a last look at them — as well as she could for the tears which rained down her honest, black face — through the carriage door.

"Never you mind, Jennie," Celia said. "If we don't come back pretty soon, we'll bring you out to us. Would you be afraid to run the blockade? Mrs. Sherwin will tell you all about us as soon as we've had time to send a letter back to her. She's coming in the morning, you know, Jennie, to tell you where to put things, and see that everything's kept just right. You'd better take a holiday this afternoon, I think; don't pick up at all. Leave everything just as it is until morning."

"Leave the house all in a clutter like this over night! I couldn't sleep, Miss Celia, if I done that."

Winthrop was already in the carriage, and Mr. Odell, one foot on the step, was giving a word of instruction to the driver, so there was time for only a word more. It must be well chosen, too. This sudden spasm of conscientiousness which had unexpectedly taken possession of Jennie indeed rendered her dangerous, but nothing to what she would be if her curiosity were

awakened. Nothing could save Martin from speedy discovery if she ever guessed there was anything to discover.

"Have it your own way," Celia said to her, "but we'd much rather you didn't. And I should think that you'd want to do the very last thing we ask you to."

"Yes'm," she answered dubiously.

It would not be safe to add another word, that was clear. She nodded to Mr. Odell, and he called to the coachman to drive on.

Though Winthrop had needed, during the past five minutes, more than one swift reminder and had cost both Celia and Mr. Odell a little uneasiness, nothing could have been finer than the part he took during the time that their carriage was jolting along slowly through the muddy streets toward the *Caroline's* wharf. He was absolutely nonchalant, his talk was even gay, but there was none of that feverish brilliancy about it which in a weaker nature so often serves as a sort of ghastly cloak to cover terror or pain. He was just himself. What he talked about none of them could remember afterwards, but Celia could feel the high nervous tension of a few moments past relaxing, and she saw with delight a little flush of color coming back into her mother's white cheeks.

"Why, we're nearly there," she said, with a

glance out of the window. "It hasn't seemed long at all. But why are we stopping?"

The driver had indeed pulled up his horses, and before the words were out of her mouth, the carriage was at a standstill.

Mr. Odell opened the door and called to the driver, "What are you stopping for?"

"The gentleman wants to speak to you, sir," was the answer, and, on the heels of the words, another voice.

"Is Captain Carver in this carriage?"

Winthrop leaned across Mrs. Townley and laid his hand on the handle to the other door.

"Wait, wait a minute," Celia implored in a whisper.

"What do you want of him?" demanded Mr. Odell.

"The pilot sent me up from the *Caroline* to find out if the captain didn't think we'd better wait till to-morrow, seeing it's got so late, to go down the river. Is he in the carriage?"

"All right," said Mr. Odell, "we'll see the pilot. Drive on." He slammed the door, and the carriage began jolting along again.

Celia and Winthrop exchanged a glance of quick alarm. Neither spoke, but to both the situation seemed critical. But it was Mr. Odell's turn now to rise to the emergency. Indeed, he was not greatly disturbed by it. Out at sea

a pilot had proved more than a match for him, but they were still on land, and the case was altered.

"Don't worry about the pilot," he said. "We'll be able to make him see things differently without much trouble. And here we are. Remember, I'm to help Winthrop out first, and you're to wait."

They had arranged this detail in advance; it had cost them indeed a good deal of thought. As soon as he had Winthrop out of the carriage, he was to lead him across the wharf to the gangplank, and was to send whoever came to meet them back to the assistance of the ladies. That would get at least one person out of the way, and might postpone the meeting with others until they were in the comparative darkness of the *Caroline's* main deck.

Since the interruption of their drive by the messenger from the ship, Mrs. Townley's condition had rapidly grown worse again, and now it was positively alarming. She was very white, and the trembling of her lips and her long, fine hands made it evident enough that she had not a shred of self-command left.

"We're there, mother," said Celia, as though the ordeal were over, and not just about to begin. "All we have to do is to wait here till some one comes to help us out of the carriage."

The carriage was pulling up, the steward already hurrying across the gang-plank; Mr. Odell had the door open and was halfway out of the carriage, but he found time for a glance at Mrs. Townley's face and a quiet word to Winthrop.

"You're not to stop, whatever happens, back here. It'll be none of your business." Then aloud, "Now, Captain, easy! There's no hurry."

Winthrop descended heavily, and had just time to turn away from the carriage, leaning on Mr. Odell's shoulder, when the steward was beside them.

"Look out for the ladies, will you?" said Mr. Odell. "I've got the captain, all right."

So far all was well, for the steward obeyed instantly, but they had only got the lesser lion out of the path. The pilot was already crossing the gang-plank and coming toward them. How they were to get by without giving him a chance for a question and putting Winthrop to the necessity of making a reply, neither could guess. For the next five seconds there was nothing to do but to walk blindly up to the peril.

But when he was still perhaps three paces from them, Mr. Odell saw his gaze leave them suddenly and go to the carriage, and an instant later they heard an outcry from Celia. It had so genuinely the ring of terror in it that even

the older man faltered, while Winthrop stopped short and turned. The sharp grip on his arm, however, recalled him to his part, and he submitted to be led across the gang-plank. The path was clear, for the pilot had run to the carriage. The others whom they met on the way were easily sent off to the assistance of the lady who had fainted, and within two minutes of the time they had left the carriage, Winthrop was safe in the captain's cabin.

Almost immediately after them came Celia and the little group who were awkwardly carrying Mrs. Townley, for Mr. Odell had rightly guessed the cause of Celia's outcry. She was still unconscious, and they carried her through the saloon to the state-room that had been selected for her. Mr. Odell stepped out into the saloon just in time to hear Mr. White telling a boy to run and fetch a doctor.

"I don't believe that's necessary," he said — for every moment of delay now in casting off and getting away was big with chances against them. "She's not been well and she's fainted, but she ought to be right again in five minutes. And it's high time we were off, without any more delay."

The mate looked at him questioningly and asked if they had not met the messenger from the pilot.

"Oh, yes, I had his message. I'll see him in a moment. But we must find out about Mrs. Townley, first."

So they stood there for two or three minutes, the one asking aimless questions about the captain's condition, and the other answering almost equally at random.

"I think I will send for a doctor, if you please," said the mate, at the end of that time. "The matter may be serious."

It was quite true, and Mr. Odell was about to assent when Celia came out into the saloon.

He had always admired her; during these past two or three days he had often wished he had a daughter just like her, but never so much as at this moment. She answered Mr. White's inquiry with the prettiest grace in the world. It wasn't necessary at all to send for a doctor, she said, and she concluded, with a smile that was half tremulous and wholly adorable, "I was dreadfully frightened. I'm afraid I was rather silly."

Even as Mr. White saw her she was lovely, and he saw only what was plain to see; as for Patrick Odell, who knew the steady courage burning in those bright eyes, the pluck in those tremulously smiling lips, he could only glance and glance away and endeavor to blink away the tears which at her smile had sprung into his eyes.

She stayed only long enough to hear Mr. White's polite assurances and Mr. Odell's fragmentary congratulations, and then went swiftly back to her mother.

"We'll attend to that matter with the pilot now, if you please, Mr. White." Mr. Odell spoke in a drier tone even than was usual with him. "Will you ask him to come down here?"

"Well, Mr. Pilot," he said, when the mate reappeared with him, "I understand you aren't exactly inclined to take us down the river in the dark."

"Are you very anxious to go?" asked the pilot. "What does the captain think about it?"

"Ask him," said Mr. Odell. "Mr. White's captain this trip. Captain Carver isn't well enough to be referred to at all." As he spoke, he moved a little farther away from the cabin door as if to prevent Martin from overhearing what they said. "But I am anxious to go. It's important that I should be in Nassau by Friday morning, and Captain Carver, too."

"It's this way," said the pilot. "The river's high, and the tide's running out, and there's going to be a white fog to-night, till midnight anyway. Leaving out our chance of striking a snag that would dig a hole in her, we're likely to get aground somewhere and stick. No — I'd say wait."

"I'm anxious enough to be in Nassau Friday to run a bigger risk; to run a bigger risk and to pay for the privilege. I'll pay you a bonus of a thousand dollars if you'll take us out to-night."

"I guess you haven't exactly got the bearings of this business," said the pilot, ironically. "I get paid all I ask for pilotage these days, and it wasn't because I wanted more that I said we'd wait till to-morrow."

If Mr. Odell had, as it appeared, made a blunder, he was quick to retrieve it. "You're quite right," he said decisively. "If you're afraid you can't do it, there's an end of it, and it isn't a question of money at all." He looked at his watch musingly. "It's a little late to try for another pilot, but we must get off somehow."

"I didn't say I *couldn't* do it. You mean to try it, anyhow, eh? Do you suppose the captain —"

"Judge for yourself. He knew what time it was when we left the house. He's wondering this minute why we aren't off already."

"Well, then —" the pilot said. He moved his feet a little nervously. "As to that bonus, now —"

"Oh, that holds," said Mr. Odell.

"Thank you," said the pilot. "Here's hoping we'll have luck. We'll need it."

A little later Celia, as she watched beside her mother, heard the signal bell, felt the well-remembered pulse of the engines once more, and looking out the window saw the well-known landmarks on the bank slipping by. They were leaving home again, and something about the notion made her laugh weakly. She found herself somewhat giddy, and steadied herself with a hand on the window ledge, drawing her breath slow and deep. Then with a gush of tears she sank on her knees beside her mother's bed.

As the pilot had prophesied, the white fog lay heavy that night upon the river and the marshes, all the way from Wilmington to the sea. The sky was clear and the moonlight, turning the mist to silver, made it all the more opaque, so that navigation was no easy matter. Nevertheless, the river to-night was a scene of unusual activity. There were nondescript craft of various sorts plying up and down all the evening, little steamers and launches, and now and then a long tow of empty rowboats. About eight o'clock, the *A. D. Vance*, a blockade-runner owned by the state of North Carolina, steamed slowly down past Campbell's Island, her decks crowded with soldiers.

The channel there sets in close to the south-

east face of the island, and the ship and the cargo she carried were plainly visible to two men who were crouching just behind the point of it. They were squatting low in the mud and water, and had between them a small log which they had used as a support in swimming. The older man — and he was much too old for such an adventure as this seemed to be — showed plainly, in spite of his efforts to hide them, the signs of exhaustion and suffering, and his companion took occasion, while he was gazing eagerly at the steamer, to cast a dubious look at him.

"We might as well heave to right here for a spell, I guess," he said. "We ain't going to be in time, anyway."

"They'll have to wait for the moon to set, Bill," the other answered. "We've got more than four hours yet. And they haven't got every boat on the river. We'll find something yet. That's all we need, and the Johnnies will find something they don't expect when they get outside."

So far he spoke hopefully, but a moment later, stifling a groan of pain, he leaned wearily on his companion. "I guess you'd better go on alone, Bill. It's no good taking me any farther, and if you were alone, perhaps you could get out in time."

"And you?" demanded the other with kindly irony. "What'd you do then, Captain?"

"I'll take the log and get as near salt water as I can before I go down to stay. I never thought to lie in fresh, but it's better'n what they wanted to give us, damn 'em. And the tide'll give me a taste of salt every day."

His companion's hand fell lightly on his shoulder. "Listen," he said.

They might have heard it before, for the night was still, had it not been for the *Vance* — the rhythmic click of a pair of oars in ill-fitting locks. The boat was coming round the west side of the island, making it seem probable that whoever was aboard liked the company the main channel afforded as little as they did.

"There's only one man rowing," said the elder man, after listening a minute. "If there ain't too many passengers, we've got our boat right here."

"Sure and easy. He's most likely a nigger who'll be scared to death if we say boo to him. There! I can make him out. There's no one else in the boat, as I can see."

"He don't row like a nigger. He rows like a deep-sea sailor."

The other assented with a nod. "Maybe it won't be so easy, after all."

"It's the best chance we'll have," said the old man.

The oarsman was pulling steadily along in about five feet of water. Half wading, half swimming, the two slipped noiselessly out into his path. Their procedure was simplified by the fact that they had to do with a practised oarsman; the boat never swerved a point out of its course. In about thirty seconds he would be abreast of them.

"Stay back a little," breathed the younger man, in a noiseless whisper. "I can pull him into the water. Two of us would only make a mess of it."

Without waiting for any reply, he moved forward a little, exactly into the path of the boat, and crouched down so that he was submerged to the eyes. So he waited till the bow was within arm's length, then with his hand he pushed it gently aside and, as the oarsman turned in his seat, he vaulted suddenly upon the gunwale. The cranky little river-skiff capsized instantly, and began to sink.

So far all had gone exactly according to his calculations, but at that very moment his part in the affair, except as an entirely passive one, was over. For, instead of sprawling wildly, as he might have been expected to do, in the effort to right his boat and recover his balance, the oarsman struck. A short fore-arm blow was all he had time for, but it landed fairly on his

assailant's neck, and the two men were slumped into the river together.

The old man rushed forward at the sound of the blow, and when the oarsman, alone, rose dripping out of the water, he stood only a short space from him. He had his arm drawn back to strike, but the man's great height as he drew himself up to it, the familiar outline of his mighty, stooping shoulders, the flash of recognition that these hints kindled, arrested the blow.

"You!" he said hoarsely.

Martin was but a second behind him. "Captain Dearborn!" he said.

They stood silent for an instant; then Martin added quickly, "You'd better look after the boat." He himself disappeared again under the water, to come up holding the limp form of the sailor. Without another word he waded ashore with him, Captain Dearborn following, dragging the boat and capturing the drifting oars.

Martin laid the man on the muddy bank, listened for the beat of his heart, and began working his arms vigorously up and down. After Captain Dearborn had emptied the water out of the boat, he pulled it up on the bank and came and stood beside him.

"You've done for him, I reckon," he said.

"No, he'll be right directly." Then, as the

man began breathing again without assistance, he added, "He'll do very well by himself now. We'd better be off."

Between them they carried the still unconscious sailor to the boat and shoved off, Martin again taking the oars, and Captain Dearborn sitting in the stern, holding the head of his fallen comrade on his knees.

The fact that it was so obviously the hour to do and not to talk, and the fear that the sounds of the brief struggle might have fallen on other ears than their own, caused Martin to settle to his work again without a word, and, as he supposed, accounted for his old commander's silence also.

But a little later the sailor sat up, looked around, trying to get the bearings of the new situation, and finally asked, "Have they took us, Captain?"

Still, to Martin's surprise, the captain said not a word, and after waiting a moment he answered the question himself.

"No," he said, "you've tumbled into the best sort of luck. Lie down again and keep quiet."

"I guess we'd better get the rights of this business," said the old man, and Martin noted that he used no form of address whatever. "Ain't you going to take us down to the fort and give us up?"

Martin shot him a look of clear astonishment, and then leaned forward so that the other could see his face more clearly through the bright mist. "You knew me a moment ago," he said gently. "I'm Martin Carver. I'm going to try to get you off, of course."

"Well, would you mind telling me *why*, Captain?"

"You needn't worry about that now," he said soothingly. "You're going to get off, all right."

But the effect of the words was anything but soothing. "Don't talk to me as if I was wrong in my head. I'm as right as you are. I want to know what you mean to do with us."

"I've got a steamer down at Smithville waiting for me," he answered, avoiding his former tone which had so irritated the old man. "She's going out to-night through the blockade. I'll find some way of getting you aboard, and then I'll take you through to Nassau. I don't know just how I'll do it yet, but I'll find a plan before we get down there. You needn't worry about it at all, either of you."

"Stow it!" the captain retorted, roused again by the implication in the last words, "I've got some thinking of my own to do. I'm not crazy; though since they brought us to Wilmington I thought more than once I must be getting so."

Martin made no answer, asked no solution to the enigma in the captain's last words, and, the old man volunteering none, seemed to settle himself to the thinking he had spoken of. The sailor, after having asked his one question, appeared to have gone to sleep. For the next hour, except for the tireless rhythm of the oars, there was silence. The tide had turned against the boat, and with the load she carried she moved heavily through the water, but steadily. Alike without haste and without flagging, the short, powerful strokes, with the half-second of rest between, took her down the river.

At the end of the time, without any change in his position, without once raising his eyes, the old captain suddenly began speaking. His voice was very low, and he spoke with the detached, reflective air of one commenting on something said not a moment before.

"Yes, sir," he said, "when they took us into Wilmington and I began to hear about Captain Martin Carver being in town and how he'd turned secesh along with his dad, I thought I must be crazy. And when I found it was true," he sank his voice still lower, and the words were no mere sailor's oath, "I wished to God that they'd found out sooner about the parole I'd given Semmes, and filled me full of lead against a wall before I knew he'd done it.

Why, you was like my son, Martin," he went on. "You'd sailed under me, and I'd taught you all you knew, and I was as proud of you as if you'd been my own son. My God, boy, why did you do it? Wasn't it bad enough that he should go without your going with him? Why did you do it, too?"

Had Martin had a reply ready, he would have had no chance to make it; for without any pause whatever, but in a very different tone, the old man went on. "As to going out with you to-night, it won't do, though we're much obliged to you. I said the twenty-third of last July that I'd be damned before I ever set foot on a deck plank owned by John Carver again, and I say it yet. And if I didn't we've got other work cut out for us to-night, eh, Bill?"

The sailor had roused when first the captain had begun to speak. "Sure," he said vaguely. But in another instant he was fully alive again. He darted a look from his commander to the oarsman, and then back again. "Are we in time?" he demanded. "Is he going out with us? If we ain't most to Federal Point there's no time to lose, for they won't wait long after the moon. Here, give me an oar."

He pulled himself up stiffly and reached toward Martin for the oar, and in doing so he recognized, for the first time, who he was.

"You —" he cried, with an oath. "Well, how much do you know? Are you going to try to stop us? If you do —"

"Sit down," Martin commanded. The sailor had crouched as if about to spring at him; but there was no break in the sweep of the oars.

"Don't be a fool, Bill," said Captain Dearborn, gently. "We've nothing to gain by fighting."

It was good enough counsel to appeal even to Bill. The gigantic size and strength of his opponent, and the strong probability that if there should be any noise about the struggle, they would not be left to finish it out by themselves, made it clear enough that they could only lose by leaving the matter to the primitive arbitrament he had meant to try.

"I guess you're right about one thing," said Martin, after a few moments' silence. "I guess it is time to get the rights of this business. You say you aren't crazy; I suppose you aren't. There are plenty of liars in the world; I want you to tell me the name of one of them."

He paused a moment; then, quietly, but in a voice vibrating with passion he asked a question that made them gasp and stare in stupid astonishment, that made them doubt for an instant whether his own wits had not gone astray.

"Who was it told you I'd turned secesh?"

"Told us!" echoed the captain, when he had

got his breath. "We didn't need no telling. We heard what you was doing — what you've been doing since last November. We didn't need any more telling than that."

The sailor laughed coarsely, and addressed his captain. "If he ain't secesh, what the hell is he?"

For the first time in the long hours since they had left Campbell's Island, the rhythm of the oars faltered, faltered and stopped.

Captain Dearborn leaned forward. "You ain't *good* secesh, though, Martin, and that's a fact. You're mean secesh. You set them on to fight, you sneak things in to them to help them keep it up, but you keep a whole skin yourself. Just sit still there, and try to think what it means."

The last words cut deepest of all, for they were an echo of the message Winthrop's hand had once scrawled on a bit of paper.

In absolute silence for a short while, the little boat drifted whither the tidal eddies would take her. Once indeed during the time the sailor moved as if about to speak, but the peremptory hand of his commander stayed him. At last Martin Carver again addressed himself to the oars, but he pulled, the others noted, like a man exhausted.

"I guess you'd better take a turn at it, Bill," said the captain. "He's about spent."

But Martin shook his head and went on rowing. At last he turned and pointed through the mist.

"There's the *Caroline*," he said. Then, after a pause, "I know what you want to do. You're going to try to get out to warn the squadron of an attack that is to be made to-night in boats. Can I help you? I'm under your orders."

"I guess not," said the captain, "except by giving us the boat."

Martin moved forward into the bow seat. "Take the oars," he said to the sailor, "and row to the *Caroline*." Then to the captain, "Which squadron do you want to warn?"

"East channel."

"You're sure of it?"

"Sure. They hadn't any secrets from us. We were to have been the kind of men that tell no tales before this."

"Then, when they hail you from the *Caroline* you ask if she is the *Theodora*. She's to go out to-night and she is berthed in the Horseshoe Channel, near Federal Point. When they tell you so, pull away in that direction. It's your way out. The *Caroline* goes out the other channel."

"And you? What are you going to do?"

"Never mind about me. I shan't be in your way."

The sailor looked doubtfully at Captain Dear-

born. "Do as he tells you," said he. "It's all right."

"Give way as quietly as you can," Martin added.

They were almost at the ship's side, deep in the long shadow she cut in the moonlight, before they were hailed. They followed Martin's directions, and were answered as he had said they would be. Then, as the sailor backed water and pulled the boat around, they became aware, from the sudden alteration in the trim, that they were alone in it. Martin had slipped over the bow and sunk noiselessly into the quiet water.

When he came up, he lay for a while quite still, treading just enough to keep his face above the surface. Then, when he had his chance, a couple of strokes took him to the side, and he drew himself up in the shadow of the port paddle-box.

CHAPTER XV

Before the moon was down behind the trees on Oak Island the *Caroline* got up her anchors and steamed slowly past Smithville and around the great bend in the channel west of Battery Island. The mist had lifted, and the harbor in the last rays of the moon was all alight. Under the frowning silhouette of Fort Caswell the *Caroline* paused, turning her wheels just enough to hold her up against the incoming tide.

"Look over there," said Mr. White. Behind the fort where the expanse of the Elizabeth River gave back to the slanting moonlight a faint reflection, they could see a dark mass which seemed to be made up of a number of small boats. The men on the bridge had not, of course, been unaware of the unwonted activity on the river tonight. They, like Mr. Odell, had heard rumors of it in advance, and were not without a guess as to what it might mean.

"I guess I had it wrong," said the pilot. "It looks as though the shindy was going to take place down here. I was told it was to be up at New Inlet."

"We've plenty of time yet," suggested the

other. "We might go back and try it the other way."

"No," the pilot answered thoughtfully. "I don't know exactly what they're going to try to do, but it's as likely to help us on as it is to hinder; or more so if we time it right. There'll be a few minutes to-night when the Yankees will have something to think about besides the runners."

The moon went down behind the trees, the sky turned from steel-gray to blue black, and the little points of light which spangled it began twinkling brilliantly.

"We may as well be off," said the pilot. With a nod of assent, Mr. White sent down word to Mr. Morgan to know if he were ready for the dash.

"Ready this half hour," came back the answer from the engine-room.

The pilot had his hand on the signal lever, when Mr. White touched his arm. "There's a boat coming our way — in a hurry, too. Hear how they pull."

In an instant came a hail, "What ship is that?"

Mr. White answered: "The *Caroline*. Do you want anything with us?"

All they got by way of immediate reply was a succession of quick orders to the boat's crew,

and the rattle of unshipped oars as it came alongside.

The officer who had hailed clambered aboard, and came up on the bridge.

"I'd like to speak to Captain Carver," he said.

"I'm acting master," said Mr. White. "What can I do for you?"

"Where is the captain?"

"In his bunk, sick. He's been sick several days."

"When did he come aboard?"

"Just before we cast off, at Wilmington."

"You saw him yourself, did you?"

"What's all this about?" demanded Mr. White. "Of course I saw him. Why not?"

"They telegraphed down from Wilmington a few minutes ago that a man who resembled Captain Carver had been seen getting into a river skiff up there an hour and more after the *Caroline* had left. Since that spy got off last week they've had a sharp eye out for anybody who looked like the captain and wasn't. My orders are to satisfy myself that it was he who came aboard this afternoon." Then, to the pilot: "You saw him, too, did you? You're sure it wasn't some one else?"

If the two men he was interrogating had been capable of reviewing the facts as they actually

stood, they would have realized that, as it had happened, no one had really had a good look at the stooping, muffled figure which Mr. Odell had led aboard. But few men are able to look at a long-accepted fact from a novel point of view, and neither of these was of the number.

"Sure it wasn't some one else!" repeated the pilot. "Do you think Mr. White and I and half the ship's crew are a pack of damn fools? We all saw him in broad daylight. Don't you think we know him?"

"Maybe we don't, though," said Mr. White, ironically. "Perhaps you'd better go down and have a look at him yourself."

"Orders are orders," answered the lieutenant. "I think I will."

He was at the head of the bridge ladder, and about to descend, when a voice from below stopped him. "Who is it he wants to see, Mr. White?" Looking down, the three men on the bridge saw Martin Carver come slowly up the ladder. As he came into the patch of light from the binnacle, they saw that his dress was disordered, as if hastily put on, and his face was colorless under his coat of tan. When he spoke it was with difficulty, like a man shuddering with cold.

"I hope you didn't turn out on my account, Captain," said the lieutenant. Then, in as few

words as possible, he repeated the cause of his errand to the *Caroline*. "I suppose," he added in conclusion, "that some idiot up in Wilmington saw a tall man somewhere in the dark, and thought he'd made a discovery. And the consequence is that I've detained you and I've lost my share in the action to-night. The boats were getting away when I left Fort Caswell, and I've got to go back there to make my report."

"Fort Caswell?" said Martin, quickly. "I understood the expedition was going out New Inlet."

"Everybody thought so till this afternoon," was the answer. "The orders weren't changed till four o'clock. I believe they found that the other squadron had been reënforced. Good night to you, and good luck getting out!"

"Can't you tell us a little more?" the pilot asked. "It may help us."

"There's no harm now, I suppose," said the officer. "Stick to Bald-head Channel and you'll be all right. The attack's to be made at the other end of the line."

He slipped over the side, and the boat pulled away. The pilot gave the long-awaited signal to the engine-room. The *Caroline* began her voyage.

Just about at the moment when Martin went

up on the bridge, Celia, who had heard the boat come alongside, and had endured the uncertainty as to what it might mean as long as she could, leaving her mother asleep, came out into the saloon and there encountered Mr. Odell.

"What is it?" she asked. "Do you think anything has happened to Martin? Oh, I wish he would come!"

"He's here. He came into the cabin about half an hour ago. He changed his clothes, and I had the steward bring him something to eat. Then we heard the boat come up, so he went out to see what it was. I wonder —"

"Listen," she said. "The boat's going away." Then, as they felt the *Caroline* starting on her way again, she sank into a chair, panting. "We're safe," she said. "We're all safe at last."

"Yes," he answered. "Bar the blockade, our troubles are over."

"What did Martin say?" she asked presently. "Did he have a very hard time getting off?"

He was not, for a moment, ready with his reply. As a matter of fact, Martin had left both himself and Winthrop thoroughly mystified and not a little alarmed. His appearance, white, dripping, like the ghost of a man drowned, wild-eyed as if he had seen such an apparition, his manner, detached, mechanical, left them no doubt that some terrible experience had befallen him

since they had parted from him that afternoon. But he had not answered their questions, had hardly spoken a dozen words all the while he was changing his clothes and eating what Mr. Odell had ordered the steward to bring him. And at last, just as he was leaving the cabin, had come the strangest thing of all. He had his hand on the latch when he turned suddenly and faced his brother, as if about to speak to him. But no words at all had come to his lips; he only looked at him, and such was the agony of the look that both men had sprung forward to support him, thinking him about to fall. Then he had swiftly opened the door behind him and left them wondering.

Perhaps, thought Mr. Odell, Celia might have the clew to it all. He would have liked to describe the scene to her, but he remembered how much she had borne and how bravely, and seeing the alarm that gathered in her face as he hesitated over her question, he spoke, at last, quickly.

"Oh, he's all right. He's had to swim for it, and he was cold and pretty well fagged out, but it would take more than that to hurt him. He's gone on the bridge now, I suppose, but no doubt he'll turn in as soon as we're past the blockade. And I'd advise you to do the same, my dear," he concluded. "You've nothing more to trouble your head about at all."

The channel from Smithville to the open sea is bent in a great double curve, like the letter S. The upper arc ends at Fort Caswell. From that point one bore southeast for Bald-head; then, sweeping round the reverse curve, steamed southwesterly out to sea. Slowly the *Caroline* crept along, leaving the Fort right astern; slowly she swung round the curve under the feet of the headland; slowly, taking her bearings from the dim range lights shown for her on Smith's Island, she began moving out towards the cruisers. Slowly at first, but at a movement of the pilot's hand on the signal lever and the clank of a muffled bell in the engine-room, faster, faster, faster still, until she was flying along like a torn gray scud of cloud across a black sky, like it, silent, like it, all but invisible.

However charged with incident or even with peril a deed may be, it cannot continue to be exciting after it has become part of a routine. Blockade-running was no longer an adventure; it was a trade, and men followed it as such, just as fire-fighters, or coast-guards, or miners — or, for that matter, linen-drapers — follow their trade. To be wary, bold, alert, was just as necessary as ever, but it was now habitual. The nervous tension may have been as great as ever, but it was unconscious. There was no longer any holding of the breath as the *Caroline*

drew up for her spring, any thought, for the moment, of the chance of failure or the consequences of it.

It was this confidence which prevented Mr. White or the pilot from objecting to Martin's presence on the bridge, for it lent the possibility of a divided authority at a moment when such a thing might prove disastrous. And indeed, while the little craft was stealing along toward the argus-eyed peril which was always ready, never asleep, both men more than once withdrew their eyes from the friendly dark ahead to cast an uneasy glance at their captain.

But he seemed to have forgotten where he was, who he was. He stood by the starboard rail, motionless. Even when the pilot, with a touch on his companion's arm, pointed out the blurred mass of a cruiser to starboard and a little ahead, he did not look at it, nor did his gaze follow theirs to port to find its next neighbor. He was looking out northwest, toward the spot where the last cruiser in the line was keeping guard off the Oak Island shore, to the spot toward which the little army of men in boats, with muffled oars, was drawing up to the attack.

Gray and silent as the scudding clouds which raced across the sky, the *Caroline* flew along toward the middle of the gap between the

cruisers. Now they were abreast, now — now falling fast astern, and not the last, but the greatest, peril of the night lay behind. The pilot's whisper "So far," and Mr. White's shifting to an easier position, acknowledged that it was past and that it had been a peril.

Slight as it was, it was enough to wake Martin Carver from his dream. He wheeled suddenly and faced them, gripping Mr. White's arm so tightly that he winced. They could see his face working in some strange excitement.

"They're waiting for it to get darker," he whispered. "There's time yet. Slow down. Mr. White, have them lower away my gig. Quick, man! There's time yet, I tell you. I'm going to — "

But as they stared at him stupidly, thinking him mad, there came across the water a single musket shot. It was too late. He wrenched free from their arms, for they had tried to hold him, and turned back toward the spot whence the sound had come. The rattle of a volley followed it, and another and another, and the hoarse, wild shout of cheering. A tongue of flame sprang into the air, and in a moment the blazing vessel was lighting up the sea. It all happened with the speed of a dream, while the *Caroline* was rushing seaward.

To the men in command of her the attack

meant little, one way or the other, but the madman on the bridge meant a good deal. He was very quiet again now, to be sure, but one could not guess what the mood of the next instant might be.

But suddenly their apprehensions about him were swallowed up by another peril which was rushing right down upon them. A cruiser of the outer patrol, flying as fast as her roaring furnaces could drive her to the aid of her stricken comrade, was headed right athwart the *Caroline's* bows. They on her bridge had not yet made out the runner at all. Both White and the pilot could see that as they held the *Caroline* would almost get clear under her bows, — almost, but not quite. The chances were that the cruiser would come crashing into her somewhere abaft her port paddle.

There were two courses open. One was to turn the *Caroline's* head a little to port, and so ram the cruiser instead of being rammed, but the chance of getting clear and getting off afterwards was desperate. There was another way, and the pilot took it.

"Steady," he yelled down to the man at the wheel. "Keep her as she is." In the same instant he pulled a cord, and the knife-blast of the *Caroline's* whistle cut the air.

Instinctively the cruiser obeyed the signal,

put her helm hard over to port, and reversed her engines. There was just room. The cruiser's stem grazed the *Caroline's* counter, but that was all.

"Where are you going?" demanded her commander. Then, with quick suspicion, "What ship is that?"

"There's a runner getting out," yelled Mr. White. "Didn't you see him. He just crossed your bows."

The *Caroline's* way had not been checked for an instant, and she was out of sight in the dark again almost before he had got the words out.

The pilot wiped his forehead with his sleeve. "That was close enough," he said.

Then they turned their attention to Martin. He was still standing as they had seen him before, gazing out toward the dying blaze off the Oak Island shore.

They sent for the steward, and he and another man led him away. He suffered it like a child, uttering no word at all. But when they entered the saloon he said to the steward: "There's a passenger in my cabin. We took one on at Smithville."

"Yes, yes, Captain. That's all right. I know all about it. Don't you worry about it."

Martin roused himself with an effort. He spoke in something like his old tone of crisp

command. "Do you remember what I told you three days ago? You were to see things you didn't understand, and to obey orders. There's a passenger in my cabin. I'm going to stay here. You needn't wait."

"Yes, sir," said the steward.

Celia had followed Mr. Odell's advice only to the extent of going back to her cabin and lying down, fully dressed, on the bed beside her mother. She acknowledged to herself quite simply that she was waiting for Martin, waiting to hear him step in the saloon outside the door. Mr. Odell had said that there was nothing more for her to worry about, and it was quite true. The ordeal was over and they were all safe. Her mother was asleep, and it seemed unlikely that she, more than Winthrop, would long be the worse for the day's experiences. And Martin was on the bridge.

She drew a contented little sigh. The future was veiled, uncertain, but it was as though shrouded in the friendly mist of an early October morning, which is nothing but the promise of a clear day. She and her mother would find a cottage at Nassau, — there was money enough for that, she reckoned, — where they could live quietly till the war was over. Winthrop would go back North, and Martin —

The thought sprang up suddenly in her mind, sprang into words which she whispered to herself ere she knew what she was saying, that Martin would still be a traitor. All his steady courage, all his unquestioning loyalty, as he understood loyalty, though they had made her forget, could not alter the fact. He had gone back to the bridge. He was still a traitor.

She denied it fiercely. What had she herself said to Harper? It was not men's opinions that made them honest or mean. He did not see something as she saw it, rather he did not see it at all. Was it not enough if he lived honestly by what he did see? "Trading in his country's necessity." That had been Winthrop's hot sentence, and she knew she had assented to it. But who were they to sit in judgment?

Profoundly as this train of thought occupied her — and she was so deep in it that the scream of the *Caroline's* whistle had suggested no alarm at all, had hardly startled her nerves — still nothing but her mind was engaged with it. She discussed it with herself as though it had involved nothing but itself, as though from it hung no corollaries. It was not until she heard Martin's voice as he spoke to the steward, outside her door, that the question suddenly gripped her heart, that she shuddered and asked herself what she should do.

She sat up swiftly, and put to rights her disordered hair. He was waiting for her, and she was going out to him. What if he were a traitor? She loved him. She would have loved him had his treason been twenty times deeper dyed. She must hate the thing he did, she must suffer for it, always perhaps. Even then, did not she love him enough to suffer?

But it was not so simple as that. He knew she loved him. He had known, she was sure, when they had talked together, up under the rafters of the little house in Wilmington. And he had not asked her to acknowledge it, had not asked the reward love gives. The thing that stood between them must be taken away first. He had asked her what it was.

And now that he had brought them safely out of danger, now that they had "a right to themselves" once more, he would ask again. And what was she to do?

She could not tell him; she could not put a price on his loyalty to his country which would stain it if ever it should awake. And was her love for him selfish enough, mean enough, to let her lie to him? To let her look into his steady eyes and say the barrier was gone, utterly, forever? What was left? To meet him, as before, denying. That was all.

"Not to-night, not to-night," she whispered.

But could to-morrow make a difference? She was not a coward. She rose and went out into the dim room where the slow patrol of his steps had told her he was waiting. With an unworded prayer in her heart she looked up at him.

But at the sight of his gray face, the prayer, the resolution, the whole web of doubt that had wrapped around her, was swept away in a wave of fear and wonder.

He hardly met her look at all, only for an instant, and then he turned away from it suddenly, as one shrinks back from something that hurts. What he said was the very words that had been upon her own lips but a moment before. "Not to-night, not to-night."

She was beside him in an instant, but under the touch of her hands he winced and drew back. She had often thought his mind and body like some great engine, so perfect was the discipline in which he held them, but now he paced the shabby saloon more like a great caged bear, his big, unwieldy body swaying as he went. Perplexed, frightened, as she was, she was still too wise to attempt to check the tempest then in its full strength. But when at last she saw him make an effort at self-control, she spoke to him.

"Can't you tell me what it means?" she asked.

He did not answer for a full minute. Then he turned upon her abruptly.

"I'm a traitor," he said. "You've known it all winter. I know it now. I'm the kind of traitor you must have despised as much as Winthrop. Why are you and he willing to speak to me, or to touch me? Why would he shake hands with me this afternoon? Why did you —" But even he could see the change that had come in her face, the prayer of thanksgiving that had sprung into her eyes, and his voice which had begun bitterly grew soft and faltered.

And her answer was to come to him again, to come close, closer, to clasp her hands behind his head and draw it down. "It has come right at last," she said. "I knew it would come right."

He did not shrink now from her caressing hands. His own were in her brown hair.

So for a while, but then quickly he unclasped them.

"No," he said, "no, not that. Why did you tempt me? I know. Because you love me. And for to-night you've forgotten that you despise me, too. But you'll remember again. You could never forget it. You'd be ashamed." He let fall her hands.

"Never ashamed after to-day," she said. "Even if you had never known — what you know now, even if you'd gone back — I'd have broken my

heart, perhaps, but I wouldn't have been ashamed. Not after to-day and all these last days."

"To-day," he repeated dully. "These last days." Then, as he guessed part of her meaning: "What difference can they make? What difference can anything make? It can't alter what I am."

Another wave of the storm seemed about to break over him, and she spoke quickly.

"Martin," she said, "won't you let me help you? Won't you sit down here and talk about it with me quietly? I've been over it all so many, many times, and now I think I understand. I know I can help. Come."

He obeyed and sat down at a table, opposite the chair she had taken for herself, his locked hands thrust out before him. She found when she tried to begin that her lips were trembling.

"When you first did it," she said, "I felt as though that one thing stained everything else. I thought you couldn't be anything else but that, — I thought you couldn't have done it unless you were afraid, and disloyal to everything, and mean. I knew that couldn't be true if you were — you. It seemed as if you must have changed. You remember the night you took us through the blockade? Well, it comforted me a little to see how brave you were, to know that

it hadn't made you a coward. And then, when Winthrop came, and I saw what you did to help him —"

"What would you have had me do? Give him up?"

"That's it," she cried. "That's it, just exactly. If you'd thought there was any credit in risking your life for him, if you'd thought that there was anything else you could possibly have done — but you didn't, not once. And after that I wasn't ashamed. And I knew that you were nothing else that was bad, except a traitor, and that you were that just because you didn't see. Martin, I think I know why you didn't see. You've never had any country at all. All the country you had was your father's fleet. And you were loyal to that. But you have a country now! You've found your country, and it isn't too late."

"No, I thank God for that." He sat there, locking and unlocking his hands. "I'm going North," he went on simply. "I'm going to Washington, to tell them what I've done and ask them to let me enlist and try to pay."

There was a moment of silence; then suddenly he demanded: "But how can I pay? What can I do more than so many others are doing, who haven't any debt?"

"None of us can pay — that way," she an-

swered gravely. "We have to ask to have our debts forgiven us."

They fell silent for a while after that, but it was a silence big with meaning for both of them. "And when I have paid as well as I can," he said at last. "After I have paid, Celia —"

He did not finish. The word "after" brought the same thought to both of them. He saw her pale a little. His own breath came quick.

"Before?" he demanded. "Can it be before? There'll be a steamer in a week to take me North — but those days? Can't I have them?"

"Yes," she said. "I want it to be that way. It must be that way. And then I'll let you go — to pay it as well as you can. Oh, are you sure there'll be a week?"

There passed no caress between them; they sat as they had before, leaning forward over the table, and talked of the past, and planned their little future; how they would be married in the church under the silk cotton trees, how they would pass the days — as if each had been a year — before he was to go.

How long they sat there they did not know, but it was dawn before she said, pointing to the brightening windows: "I must go. Mother will be waking presently."

They both rose, and she, about to leave him,

hesitated. Then, a wave of color sweeping over her face, she held it up for him to kiss.

His own went crimson. He took her in his great hands.

"Have I any right to be happy?" he demanded.

"You've a right to make me happy." That, and the kiss, were her answer.

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